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1796

Marianne Thorne
AGATHA;
 — OR —
A Narrative
OF
Recent Events.
A NOVEL,
In three Volumes.
VOL. I.



Bid them be chaste, be innocent, like thee;
Bid them in duty's Sphere as meekly move — *Mason*

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A G A T H A.

CHAP. I.

THE following Narrative affords an instance of one, who, endued by nature with the tenderest and most susceptible of hearts, was nevertheless mistress of herself—of her reason—and triumphed over every propensity not warranted by the strictest, and, in *her* case, by the *cruellest* duty. If these volumes should fall into the hands of those who possess ingenuous hearts, and who, with the warm feelings of youth, are yet open to conviction, let them read them, and learn to triumph likewise: for others they are not written. No! let those who determine madly to swim down the stream of passion,

sink in the dreadful vortex to which it will inevitably carry them! to such the friendly hand is in vain held out—the friendly warning in vain offered:—neither precept nor example can teach us to conquer what we are determined to believe unconquerable.

Sir Charles and Lady Belmont had long lived happy in each other, and equally loved and esteemed by all who surrounded them. Their ample fortune afforded them means for the indulgence of every luxury; but what they esteemed the greatest, was the power it afforded them of dispensing comfort to others. Their hospitable table was open to every one whose merit as well as rank entitled them to regard; while the crumbs which fell from it were a daily supply to numbers of their poor neighbours, whose prayers and blessings followed them wherever they went.

Twelve years had elapsed since Sir Charles, who fell in love with and ran away with Lady Belmont on his travels, had been married, and he had yet no prospect of an heir

to his ample possessions. For many years he had appeared to desire such a blessing with the most anxious solicitude; and Lady Belmont, a sharer in all his wishes, viewed frequently with tears, and almost with envy, the ruddy offspring of the peasants around them; while their cottages seemed to possess greater felicity than her splendid mansion, since they contained that for which alone she sighed. But, whether from a resignation taught her by her mother in her last and only visit to her in France, or from whatever other cause, Lady Belmont as well as Sir Charles had for the last three years appeared to dread an event which they had before considered as so necessary to their happiness; and they were heard frequently to thank Heaven that there was no probability of their adding one to the long list of those, who, born with apparent prospects of comfort, were nevertheless destined to pass their days in unavailing sorrow.

At length, however, contrary to all expectation, and now, it appeared, contrary to her wishes, Lady Belmont became

the mother of a daughter, whose infant beauty, and her mother's sorrow were equally the wonder of all her friends. She would gaze upon the child wistfully as it lay on her lap, and then, bursting into a flood of tears, give it to the nurse to convey out of her sight.

The little Agatha, for so she was called after her mother, evinced, as early as the marks of disposition were discoverable, every sign of a warm and benevolent heart, a sweet and serene temper, and a soul exquisitely susceptible. Her mother surprised her one day, when about three years old, wiping with her frock the tears from the cheeks of a little beggar girl, and emptying her pocket of all her little treasures to give to her; and as Lady Belmont approached, looking up in her face, yet scarcely able to speak for the feelings which agitated her infant breast, she said, "Poor girl cry, Mama, Agatha heart break!" This is but one of a thousand instances of early benevolence remembered and related by those who knew her in her childhood.—Studious to make her parents happy,

happy, if her penetrating eye discovered a mark of dejection on either of their countenances she would throw aside every toy that had before seemed to delight her, and prattle for an hour till her repeated efforts had dispersed the gloom.—Nor did she possess the qualities of the heart alone. Her mind was susceptible of and anxious for improvement; and as she grew older, she excelled in every solid as well as ornamental accomplishment. Her parents encouraged her application, and were delighted, though, apparently, not without a mixture of sorrow, at all her attainments.

Lady Belmont would often say to her,
“ Endeavour, my Agatha, to excel in every
“ thing; but chiefly I recommend to your
“ attention those accomplishments which are
“ resources to us when deprived of society;
“ which make us not alone even when alone,
“ and which may render even a life of seclusion
“ a life of pleasure. To depend on
“ others for amusement is to build our happiness
“ on a sandy foundation, which every
“ wind that blows may destroy in a moment

“ A thousand inevitable circumstances may
“ separate us from the world and from all we
“ prize in it. Let us not, therefore, leave
“ ourselves friendless. A book, a pen, a
“ pencil, are sure and faithful friends.

“ These will attend us when deprived of
“ all others, and prove a source of unvarying
“ delight. The world is replete with in-
“ stances of folly and ingratitude; the com-
“ forts it affords are transitory and futile:
“ repentance treads upon the heels of plea-
“ sure; and there is no real happiness to be
“ found but in retirement and solitary amuse-
“ ments. ”

“ Imagine not,” she would continue,
“ that the gay and dissipated are ever happy.
“ After a night passed in forced mirth and
“ dancing, they arise at noon languid, hag-
“ gard, and dispirited; not with the glow
“ of health, not with the chearful serenity
“ depicted on my Agatha’s countenance
“ when she arises to the duties of the day.

“ Love, perhaps the purest of worldly
“ pleasures, since, if genuine, it includes be-
“ nevolence, is productive of sorrows for
“ which

“ which all its vaunted blessings are inadequate to atone : if it meets with obstacles
“ it is misery ! if it finds none, it either creates them, or languishes through very
“ indulgence : then jealousy, the most agonizing of human sufferings, is its constant
“ attendant.

“ Marriage, honourably as it is spoken of,
“ and, happy state as it is represented, is replete with troubles. For one pair who
“ find comfort in each other, as your father and I have done, there are thousands who
“ curse the day that united them. If love be the inducement to marry, our happiness
“ must experience a diminution ; for even its votaries, and warmest advocates acknowledge that love is transitory. A marriage
“ from mercenary views has no chance for happiness. Friendship is the only allowable motive : and for friendship why
“ should they marry who may be friends without.”

These were the lessons Lady Belmont constantly inculcated, and this the picture she incessantly drew of the world. Agatha listened

ed with respectful attention ; yet could not forbear thinking that her mother reasoned too severely : and with the ardour of youthful hopes, she still fancied that the world, bad as it was, might afford her some happiness : and that when the time should arrive that she was permitted to enter it, thus guarded by caution, she should be able to discriminate ; to separate the bad from the good ; to make a moderate use of pleasures ; to dance without fatigue, love without *much* jealousy, and be one of the favoured few who married happily like her parents.

At sixteen, Agatha, beautiful and accomplished, formed the subject of conversation throughout the neighbourhood. The few who had seen and conversed with her dwelt so continually on her praises, that many, even of her own sex, walked frequently near her house to catch a view of her ; which was perhaps the more desired as it was obtained with difficulty.

One person only was treated by Sir John and Lady Belmont with any degree of intimacy ; all their other acquaintance, as their
daughter

daughter grew up, they had dropped by degrees; till at last a few ceremonious visits were all they paid or received. Miss Hammond alone they received and acknowledged as a friend, and with her only was Agatha permitted to associate. Miss Hammond was an amiable and uncommonly sensible woman, and was universally beloved and respected. Though considerably turned of thirty, she had every requisite to render her the companion of youth: she was lively, entertaining, and studious to please; and possessed an happy talent of *creating*, as it were, amusements. With her Agatha passed some of her most delightful hours; and, while she looked up to her for instruction in her graver moments, in her gayer ones she regarded her as a sister. To her she laid open every thought of her innocent heart, which a severity in Lady Belmont's manner forbid her to do to her. Miss Hammond, nevertheless, inculcated the same principles, the same dread of the world, the same wish for solitude; but the tints in *her* picture were softened by benevolence, and Agatha listened without reluctance. To Miss

Hammond she was indeed indebted for the most valuable lesson of her life; to her precepts she owed that conquest of herself, that command of her feelings which rendered her truly estimable, and her character perfect.

“ Our feelings, my beloved friend,” Miss Hammond would say, “ were given us for
“ the noblest of purposes. Heaven endued
“ us with sensibility that we might be alive to
“ Religion, pity, charity, and friendship. And
“ while that sensibility is directed by our reason to its proper channel, it is our richest
“ ornament! But when our feelings, our
“ passions, get the better of ourselves; when,
“ because we have such and such wishes, such
“ and such propensities, we feebly yield to
“ them, we are no longer free agents: we are
“ under the dominion of those passions which
“ while they are suffered to govern *us* will
“ infallibly render us wretched; but which
“ if, on the other hand, we governed *them*,
“ would only serve to make us happy, and
“ give a zest to our enjoyments.”

Agatha's life had thus passed in study retirement and conversation, when an immediate

mediate summons to France on account of Lady Belmont's fortune, obliged her parents to leave England for a short time. Agatha, but recently recovered from a severe illness, was too weak to bear the journey; and they left her, not without uneasiness, under the care and protection of Miss Hammond, at whose house she was to pass the short period of their absence.

A new scene now presented itself to her view. She had never passed a night under any roof but her father's, had scarcely ever entered another door, and to spend a few weeks with Miss Hammond in *her* house, see, perhaps, some of *her* friends, was a prospect of delight, small indeed to many, but to her most enchanting. She could not sleep for some nights in her new abode: "the
" novelty of the situation, my dear Miss
" Hammond," she said, " keeps me awake."

Among the few who called upon Miss Hammond on her return home, (for to most of her friends she had written to say that Lady Belmont wished her daughter to be seen as little as possible at present) was the eldest

daughter of Sir John Milson, a neighbouring Baronet. Miss Milson possessed a tolerably good understanding, which she had so far cultivated as to render herself esteemed sensible by many of her acquaintance.

Indeed she concealed no part of the knowledge she had acquired, and eagerly made a display of it upon every occasion. She had read a little history, a little poetry, and abundance of novels. In the first branch of knowledge, she was mistress of some of the leading events, and most of the common-place anecdotes relative to our own country: talked much of Julius Cæsar's invasion, was familiar with the names of Hengist and Horsa, and perfectly acquainted with William the Conqueror's illegitimacy. In poetry she was no less an adept; dwelt perpetually on Pope's delightful flow of versification; was absolutely enamoured, as she styled it, of the sublimity of Milton, from the first book of whose *Paradise Lost* she daily quoted some lines, beyond which, it has been supposed, she had never read. She possessed from nature some sensibility, and from art infinitely more. She
would

would watch for whole hours a few flies imprisoned in a ditch; and delight her feeling heart by snatching them from their watery grave, and restoring them one by one to life and liberty. But the chief of her perfections, and that for which Lady Milson most prided herself in her daughter, was her skill in planning and executing beautiful little ornamental boxes, purses, &c.; and in her taste, superior to *every thing that ever was seen* in working trimmings: her roses as *large as life*, and hearts-ease so *naturally coloured* that no one could mistake them for any thing else, were the admiration of all her acquaintance. Such was Miss Milson, and such her perfections. Agatha possessed sufficient discernment to remark her foibles, but had too grateful an heart to feel insensible of the attention she paid her.

“ This, your lovely inmate, dear Miss Hammond,” said Miss Milson, “ reminds me of Milton’s beautiful lines,

“ Grace was in all her steps”—

“ for there is a something in her beyond all
“ our

“our imagination can paint of a Clarissa or
“Cecilia ! her society must render your little
“habitation infinitely interesting ?”

“I consider it indeed,” said Miss Ham-
mond, “as one of my greatest felicities ; and
“only regret,” continued she, sighing, “that
“I may be so soon deprived of it.”

“Ah ! Miss Hammond,” said Agatha,
“you forget the precept you have so frequent-
“ly taught *me* : never to embitter present
“comforts by a dread of losing them. But
“I will not forget your lessons ; and will not
“suffer myself to think that I shall ever lose
“the happiness I now enjoy.”

“A very just reproof !” said Miss Milson.
“Hope, rather than fear, is a divinity whom
“we ought to worship eternally. When
“Julius Cæsar landed in Britain,” (How,
thought Agatha, can Julius Cæsar have any
connection with the present subject ?) “when
“he landed, had he not indulged hope, instead
“of fear for the future consequences of his
“temerity, we might never have owned the
“Romans as masters.”

“Possibly

“Possibly so;” said Miss Hammond, “yet
 “neither you nor I should have been great
 “losers if such an event had not taken
 “place.”

“Doubtless not;” returned Miss Milson,
 “I speak, principally, with reference to him.
 “Yet the Romans introduced luxury; and
 “luxury, by enervating our forefathers, ob-
 “liged them to have recourse to Hengist
 “and Horfa for assistance; and from the
 “Saxons we inherit many of those virtues
 “which adorn a Sir Charles Grandison.
 “Thus, you see, the event has, in reality,
 “an intimate connection with ourselves.”

This was reasoning too deep to be contro-
 verted, and Miss Hammond gave a nod of
 assent.

When Miss Milson took her leave, she
 gave Agatha a pressing invitation to visit her
 at Milson Hall. “Such as our mansion is,
 “Miss Belmont,” she said “it will delight-
 “edly receive you. You shall visit my sum-
 “mer-house, my Cassetta, as I term it;—
 “You understand Italian? A lady, who was
 “perfect mistress of the language, taught me
 “that

“ that name for my little rural retreat. It
“ is placed on the summit of a mount of
“ honeysuckles. My father will receive
“ you with pleasure; and though I must
“ apologize for the coarse rusticity of the
“ reception you may meet with from him,
“ be assured he will think his table gladden-
“ ed by your presence.”

When Miss Milson was gone, Agatha entreated with so much earnestness to be permitted to accept her invitation, that Miss Hammond, at length, promised to accompany her thither.

But a far different scene—a scene of misery awaited Agatha, and nipped all her fairy prospects in the bud ! Miss Hammond, the friend of her heart, her companion from infancy, to whose precepts she owed her virtues, to whose friendship she was indebted for most of the hours of happiness she had known, was seized with a violent fever ; and though every possible assistance was procured immediately, the disorder baffled medicine ; a delirium ensued, and she expired in the arms of her distracted friend.

Agatha

Agatha remained during several hours in a state of stupefaction; and when she, at length, recovered her senses, awaking but to anguish, she was seized with fits which threatened her life; or, if that was preserved, at least her reason. Miss Hammond's servants treated her with every possible attention; and by their assistance, added to the benevolent exertions of the physician, she was at length restored to some degree of calmness and composure. But she, who a few days before had felt herself the happiest of human beings, was now the most miserable! She seemed alone upon the earth. Beside Miss Hammond she had never had a friend, never a companion for even a day. To her own servants she had never been permitted to speak; and her parents far distant, there seemed not a being in the world to whom she had the least relation, or on whose regard she had the smallest claim. And when to this melancholy reflection was added her anguish for the loss of the kindest of friends, imagination can hardly draw a more distressing picture.— By the advice of the physician she determined

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ed to return to her own house, and await there the return of her parents, to whom she wrote, as soon as she had power to write, to inform them of the melancholy event : but till the last sad duties were paid to her departed friend, she would not quit her remains, and determined, on the day after, to affix, as Dr. Harley had proposed, her seal on every thing, and quit the house.

C H A P. II.

THE melancholy day was now arrived. Agatha had shut herself up in a back parlour, that she might avoid a prospect of the sad procession. She had thrown herself into a chair, and was indulging those tears from which alone she hoped for or obtained relief, when the door opened, and a young man entered, on whose countenance were depicted the strongest marks of agony and horror. Agatha started up, and attempted to quit the room : but her trembling limbs refused to support her, and she sunk again

again into her chair. The young man at first seemed not to remark that she was present: totally absorbed in misery, he appeared insensible of every thing. Agatha, whose gentle heart for a moment almost forgot her own sorrows in the sufferings of the stranger, again offered to rise, and said, "Shall I fetch you any thing?"

"Nothing, nothing on earth! No, there is not a being who can give me comfort now!" Then covering his face with his hands, he leaned against the wall without having power to utter another word.

Agatha, again assuming strength to speak, in the hope that by divulging his sorrows they might be softened, "You are some friend," she said, "of the dear friend"—She could say no more. He made no reply. At length, going up to him, with a strength inspired by terror, "Sir, Sir!" she said, "whoever you are, recollect yourself, recover your senses for God's sake. I am ill able to administer comfort who so greatly stand in need of it myself; but I will strive to forget my own sorrows to offer consolation
" to

“ to you. Speak, speak to me, I conjure
“ you ! Who are you ? What can I do for
“ you ? ”

The stranger who had seemed insensible of every thing before, now turned round, and looked at Agatha with a mixture of wildness and astonishment. At length, putting his hand to his forehead, and forcing himself to speak, “ Oh ! ” he said, wonder not at my agony ! wonder rather, that I have seen what I saw, and live ! I met---just Heaven ? I met my dear, my only sister carried—He was again unable to speak. After a pause, endeavouring to recollect himself, he continued :
“ Many, many years had we been separated ;
“ at length, released from captivity, I returned, I flew to meet her—to meet her—
“ Good God how ! ”—

“ Amazement ! ” said Agatha, “ And are you the brother whom she so long believed dead, whom she lamented ? ”

“ Lamented ! ” he replied, “ Oh that I had never lived to lament *her* ! ”

His agony by degrees began to subside into a settled sorrow which found relief from dwelling

dwelling on the subject of his griefs. "Oh!" he said, "had you known her kindness, her sweetness! Oh! she was sister, friend, mother, every thing to me!"

"Alas!" said Agatha, "I know but too well the kindness of her heart; for Oh, though bound by no ties of blood, she was all those to me!"

"And what kind angel are *you*," said Mr. Hammond, "who, thus miserable, could forget your own distresses to compassionate a stranger?"

"Alas! said Agatha, I too am a stranger in the world! My parents are in France. They left me under the protection of the best of friends. She is taken from me; and I have now none to fly to."

Agatha again burst into a flood of tears:

"Forgive me, Oh forgive me," said Mr. Hammond, "that I thus cruelly recalled the remembrance of your griefs. Oh let me not be such a wretch as to add to your sorrows who have so kindly poured balm to mine!"

"Say no more," said Agatha, "we will both strive

“ strive to be comforted, indeed we will,
“ We will apply to Heaven for resignation,
“ and seek for alleviation to our sorrows
“ where only it is to be found. But since
“ you are so kind as to accept the poor con-
“ solations a sharer in calamity can offer, will
“ you permit me to fetch you any refresh-
“ ment?”

“ Generous, kind as you are,” said he,
“ how can I ever be sufficiently grateful!
“ But may I not ask the name of one to
“ whom I am so greatly obliged?”

“ Agatha Belmont.”

“ Agatha Belmont!” he repeated, “ Ne-
“ ver, never shall it be forgotten—never will
“ I cease to acknowledge to whom I owe a
“ restoration to reason, to a calm I never
“ conceived it possible again to have felt.”

Agatha now left the room to order refresh-
ments, and retired for some minutes to her
own, in order to recover by reflection her
almost exhausted spirits. Yet far different
were her sensations on returning to her cham-
ber to those she had felt in quitting it half
an hour before. She was still wretched; she
had

had yet lost the friend she lamented, and was sensible she should eternally lament ; but she was no longer alone in the world, no longer the only sufferer it contained. In the yet more poignant distresses of Mr. Hammond, her own appeared to lessen, and in him she had found one to whom she could unbosom them ; one who from his own would pity hers, and the hope of mitigating whose anguish promised comfort : and she thanked Heaven that had thus given her, in the bitter moments of separation from one friend, another who might, in some measure, supply her place.

The sad remainder of the evening was spent in mutual sorrow, and mutual tears ; but sensible of comfort from each other's society, they parted at a late hour.

Agatha had before purposed to return home on the day following ; but studiously kept ignorant of the customs of the world, she knew not that there was the smallest impropriety in her remaining with Mr. Hammond ; and receiving comfort from him, and conscious that she bestowed it in return, she determin-

determined for a few days at least to remain with him. But whatever consolation Mr. Hammond received from her society, he determined to seize the first opportunity of hinting to her the necessity of her leaving him. He soon discovered how much she was a stranger to the world, and he had too much generosity to purchase a moment's comfort at the expence of the character of one, of whose purity and sweetness he was every moment more convinced. But the opportunity he sought never seemed to arrive. The task was most painful, and almost favoured of ingratitude. Yet, on the other hand, the ingratitude of suffering her to sully her fame for his sake appeared far greater: and he determined at length, whatever he might suffer, to assume courage, and introduce the subject the next hour they passed together.

"Miss Belmont," said Hammond, as they walked in the evening, "appears to have seen very little of the world?"

"Very little, indeed," said Agatha, "and
"I have been taught to dread it; but the
"few persons I have known contradict those
"ungener-

“ ungenerous sentiments. I have met with
“ seven or eight persons, and never yet knew
“ an instance of ingratitude, or experienced
“ a mark of unkindness from any of them.
“ Miss Milson, though a stranger, was very
“ kind to me ; your sister was all my heart
“ could wish, and you appear to resemble
“ her.”

“ It shall be equally my study and my
“ pride to merit your esteem,” replied Mr.
Hammond ; “ and I would rather inflict the
“ severest punishment on myself than deserve
“ to forfeit it.”

“ You never will, I am assured,” said
Agatha, interrupting him. “ I have been de-
“ ceived, I am convinced. Of the world, of
“ which so dreadful a picture has been drawn
“ to me, *you*, and all I have known, form a
“ part ; and are all so many evidences of the
“ falsehood, or, at least, of the mistakes
“ of the system of distrust I have been
“ taught.”

“ Certainly,” replied Mr. Hammond,
“ the world deserves not all the censures you
“ have heard. Yet there are many who,
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“ under the semblance of a regard for propriety, cruelly, barbarously condemn the innocent.”

“ Ah!” said Agatha, smiling, “ this is but a repetition of my mother’s lessons. But perhaps it is thus with every one. Society may resemble what I have read of life itself, which, though all condemn as replete with troubles, all court a continuance of, and all fear to lose.”

Mr. Hammond had now made two attempts to introduce the subject, which Agatha’s artless interruptions had as often frustrated; and he was meditating another, when a servant came to inform Agatha that a lady enquired for her; and she went into the house, promising Mr. Hammond to return to him as soon as possible.

She was met at the parlour door by Miss Milson, who, taking her hand, said, in her usual style, “ after the severe loss you have sustained, sweet Miss Belmont, in the death of our much valued friend, I am come to say how sincerely my heart sympathizes in your affliction.”

This

This introduction was more than Agatha could support, and she burst into tears. Her lost friend had been the perpetual theme of Mr. Hammond and herself; and to talk of her with him had now become familiar and even a consolation to her; but the subject thus injudiciously mentioned by another revived in a moment every painful reflection, and probed too deeply a wound yet unhealed.

“ Sweet sensibility!” said Miss Milson.
 “ How these feelings elevate you in my esteem! Ah! let others boast their apathy,
 “ and delight in the want of all that is endearing or lovely; I would not forego the
 “ painful luxury of sensibility for the wealth
 “ of worlds. My heart bleeds for the sufferings of even an animal, an insect: and
 “ it is my glory that it does.”

Perhaps the moments in which we really feel, are of all others the least suited to a dissertation on sensibility; and Agatha was incapable of replying, or indeed of attending to this elaborate harangue.

After a minute's pause, Miss Milson proceeded. “ I am come, likewise, to solicit

“ my dear Miss Belmont’s presence at Mil-
“ son Hall, to entreat you to accompany me
“ thither this evening. Sir John and Lady
“ Milson having heard you still continued
“ with Mr. Hammond, and reflecting on
“ the injury you might sustain from it, have
“ requested me to add their entreaties to my
“ own.”

“ They and you are very kind,” said Aga-
tha ; “ but,” continued she, misunderstanding
the injury alluded to, “ far from receiv-
“ ing any injury from Mr. Hammond’s
“ grief, his distresses, strange as it may seem,
“ have been a means of lessening my own.
“ The fear of adding to his sorrows has forc-
“ ed me to combat mine, and I am con-
“ vinced his society has given me a relief I
“ could not have found elsewhere.”

Miss Milson smiled at Agatha’s misappre-
hension ; but without explaining her meaning,
renewed her entreaties to accompany her home.
“ Every thing,” she said, “ shall be done to
“ amuse and delight your mind. We will
“ together explore the fairy regions of ro-
“ mance, turn over together the page of his-
“ tory.

“ tory. Pope’s melodious numbers shall
“ harmonize our souls, and the sublimity of
“ Milton lift us out of ourselves ; while our
“ needles shall create an ever-blooming gar-
“ den.”

Agatha repeated her thanks ; but requested permission to consult with Mr. Hammond before she determined on leaving him ; to which Miss Milson, not without evident marks of surprise, assented.

When Agatha returned to Mr. Hammond she informed him of Miss Milson’s invitation ; but added, that she had many doubts whether she could or ought to accept of it, and was come to advise with him.

“ Since Miss Belmont does me the honour
“ to appeal to me,” said Mr. Hammond,
“ I must, however I may suffer by the loss I
“ shall sustain, entreat her not to refuse a
“ proposal every way so-eligible ; where new
“ scenes and new society will chase the pain-
“ ful remembrances this melancholy spot
“ excites.”

“ I know not that,” said Agatha, “ yet did
“ my inclination plead with me to leave you,

“ there is a monitor within my own breast
“ which would forbid me. *That* tells me
“ that to forsake the afflicted to whom my
“ presence may afford consolation, to forsake
“ them for those to whose many comforts
“ I could give no encrease, would be contrary
“ to that duty which I hope to make the
“ constant rule of my conduct. No, Mr.
“ Hammond, Miss Milson is happy and
“ wants me not ; you are unhappy and I
“ ought not to leave you.”

“ Kind ! sweet Miss Belmont ! what words
“ can express my gratitude !” replied Mr.
Hammond. “ But, be assured, there are no
“ means by which I can receive a comfort
“ equal to the consciousness of your happiness.”

“ Ah !” said Agatha, “ there was a time
“ when to have gone to Miss Milson’s would
“ have made me happy ! but my heart is no
“ longer turned to gaiety ; and to wander
“ alone with you, mingle my tears with yours
“ —to dwell on the loved idea of one dear,
“ O how dear ! to us both, affords more real
“ comfort,

"comfort, nay pleasure to my heart than any
"society on earth could bestow."

"Dear, *dear* Miss Belmont!" said Hammond taking her hand, and pressing it involuntarily between both his, "this is too
"much!" then appearing to recollect himself, he loosed her hand.

"Why this?" said Agatha. "I do not,
"you see I do not refuse on your account.
"No, it is chiefly on my own; for how
"could I bear the idle jests of the thought-
"lessly happy, when my own heart was sink-
"ing within me!"

"My dear Miss Belmont," said Hammond, "never, not even in the first sad moments of our meeting, when your sweetness
"recalled me to life and reason, never did you
"appear so amiable to me as at this moment.
"Yet believe me when I assure you that you
"must accompany Miss Milson. To lose you,
"to part from you is a trial only less severe
"than that your presence enabled me to sustain.
"But there are reasons why your
"continuance with me would be highly im-
"proper."

“ Highly improper !” repeated Agatha.
“ You astonish me.”

“ The world,” resumed Mr. Hammond,
“ contains few hearts as pure as yours ; and
“ those who are incapable of benevolence
“ themselves impute the actions it inspires to
“ motives like those which govern their own
“ conduct. Thus ungenerous, they might
“ condemn your continuance with me.”

“ And to what motives could they impute
it,” said Agatha, “ for what reasons con-
“ demn it ?”

Mr. Hammond hesitated, and Agatha re-
peated her question.

“ To motives,” said Mr. Hammond,
“ farthest from the purity of your heart.
“ Yet deign to receive from me the assur-
“ ance of perpetual gratitude, of an esteem
“ amounting to veneration. O Miss Bel-
“ mont ! you are—you are an angel !—”

Miss Milson now coming to them pre-
vented any farther conversation ; and Agatha
informed her that she meant to profit by her
kind offer ; but that she could not yet dispel
her anxiety at the thought of leaving Mr.
Ham-

Hammond thus alone, friendless, and a prey to sorrow.

“ If Mr. Hammond will sometimes stray to our abode,” said Miss Milson, “ he will be received with the welcome of a friend.”

To this invitation Mr. Hammond replied with politeness, and Agatha heard it with evident pleasure. Then turning to him, and laying her hand upon his arm, she conjured him, with a countenance expressive of the most anxious solicitude, to endeavour to support his spirits. “ O Mr. Hammond,” she said, “ think of me ; and if ever you are inclined to indulge in grief, remember, O remember Agatha Belmont !”

Hammond, who had scarcely power to reply, and who feared in the presence of Miss Milson, to utter, as Agatha had artlessly done, all that he felt, replied, after a moment’s hesitation, “ yes, Miss Belmont, never shall your unmerited anxiety for a stranger be forgotten. I were unworthy such generous injunctions should I not endeavour to obey them.”

The coach, which had been in waiting, was now ordered to the door; and Agatha went to her chamber to make the few preparations necessary for leaving an house which she had entered with far different sensations.

When Agatha had left the room, Hammond gave Miss Milson a short description of their first melancholy interview; and to the benevolence of an heart unpracticed in the world, and which felt for every one that was unhappy, he said he was indebted for the kind solicitude she had just witnessed. His explanation, added to her own observance of Agatha's ingenuousness, removed in a great measure the doubts she had at first entertained of her conduct being actuated by tenderer motives.

Agatha returned to them in tears, and with an heart almost broken. The remembrance of the friend she had lost, and whose habitation she was now perhaps quitting for the last time, rendered her unable to speak; and Hammond, little less affected, could only bid Heaven bless her, as he put her into the carriage:

riage: while their mutual distress opened an ample field for Miss Milson's powers of elocution; and she was uttering another pathetic dissertation on the charms of sensibility, when the coach drove from the door. Agatha put her head out of the window, waved her hand to Mr. Hammond; and when both he and the house were out of sight, burst into an agony of tears, which all Miss Milson's efforts and eloquence were unable to restrain. Milson Hall was but a few miles distant; and with difficulty could she recover her spirits sufficiently to enable her to speak with any degree of composure before they arrived there.

C H A P. III.

MILSON Hall was a venerable structure, which had remained in the possession of the family whose name it bore, for many generations. It owed more alteration than embellishment to the taste of its present possessor; who, to the ancient gothic edifice of stone, had added a wing of brick in a modern

dern style ; and who had cut down two venerable rows of elms which formed an avenue to the house, to make a sweep for carriages in front round a plot of grass, in the centre of which was planted agreeable to Lady Milson's taste, one tall fir tree ; and around it, half a dozen rose trees, in compliance with her daughter's. A new walled garden on one side, and superb coach-house and stabling on the other, effectually precluded any prospect which might have opened upon the house when the elms were taken away. Sir John, notwithstanding, esteemed himself a man of very great taste ; and indeed all his family laid claim to the same merit in some respect or other.

Sir John was the youngest son of the youngest branch of the family of the Milsons ; who, from the improbability of his ever inheriting the family title and estate, and from his father's inability to give to his sons sufficient fortunes to live independent of trade, had been brought up an hosier. In business he was esteemed a shrewd, wary, prudent man ; and had he never been exalted to a rank for
which

which neither nature nor education designed him, he might have passed through life with a tolerable share of respectability. In person he was short and sturdy ; and on his face the marks of low cunning were so legibly written, that less than the skill of a Lavater was necessary to trace the outlines of his character. His little grey eyes, sunk deep in their sockets, "twinkled rather than shone" ; while his complexion which was universally red with a tinge of purple, bespoke the *clower*, as he termed it, of his own table. Imagining himself wonderfully facetious, he delighted in his own jests ; though the diversion they afforded was chiefly confined to himself ; her Ladyship's excellent appetite, his daughter's sensibility, with now and then a story of his contriving to give a kiss to a pretty girl, were the most frequent subjects of his mirth. In short, his wit was coarse vulgarity, his sense mean cunning ; and his piety, charity, and hospitality, were each ostentation.

Lady Milson was tall and somewhat awkward ; but her face still retained the marks of beauty, for which in her youth she had been

been eminently distinguished, and which she still regarded as her highest perfection. Her understanding was rather below the common level ; but, considering it had received no advantage from education, disgraced as little as could be expected her present station. She was good-natured and obliging to her friends ; and had she been married to a man of a liberal turn of mind, instead of one whose meanesses she had early learned to contract, she would probably have been a respectable member of society. A professed votary of taste, her dressing room was filled with pictures, vases, and numberless other ornaments ; which, though they bore no mark of the correct taste of the painters or sculptors of antiquity, were, nevertheless, highly commended by her Ladyship, and their various beauties pointed out to her acquaintance. She had a summer-house in the garden fitted up entirely in her own taste ; the only opening of which was to a south brick wall. But the want of prospect from without, was amply supplied by that within ; the walls being entirely covered with landscapes.

The

The family of Sir John Milson consisted of himself, his Lady, two sons, two daughters, and ten servants. His house was besides generally filled with company, as he prided himself on his hospitality.

Miss Cassandra, the youngest daughter, was the exact counterpart of her mother, whose darling she had been from her infancy: she was moderately wise, very handsome, and very good-humoured.

Mr. Valentine Milson, the eldest son, had been married for some years to a woman of sense and refinement. But though possessing much goodness of heart and disposition, he was a proof that mere good-nature, unattended by some share of sensibility, and wanting absolutely the polish of a gentleman, is incapable of making a woman of feeling and discernment happy. Mrs. Milson had married him, partly at the instances of her friends, who were unwilling she should reject an offer so advantageous, and partly because she felt the gratitude natural in a young mind on being distinguished as the object of attachment by an handsome, and generally esteemed, young

young man ; and she mistook, as is frequently the case, that gratitude for love.

Mr. William Milson was a character totally opposite to his brother. Like his eldest sister he was vain of and exulted in his sensibility ; and his romantic attachment to a young widow in the neighbourhood was the theme of every tongue. Sonnets and pastorals were found in every path he frequented ; and, shunning society, his whole time was spent in a little retirement sacred to himself at the end of a grove ; the style and taste of which differed entirely from those fitted up by his mother and sister. It was built in the form of a cottage, and thatched ; while a

“ Wicket opening with a latch ”

led to it, at the distance of a few paces.

Such was the family to which Agatha was now to be introduced.

She was met at the door by Sir John himself, who, as he handed her out of the carriage, declared, that she was such a nice young woman that if Valentine was not married, and

William

William desperately smitten already, he should like her for a daughter most monstrously, upon his credit. "But you are welcome here," he continued, "heartily welcome, Miss. It has never been said by any one, I believe, that any body of any sort of rank, especially the daughter of one who is a Baronet like myself, is not welcome to Sir John Milson's."

Agatha had scarcely time to return her thanks for this extraordinary civility, before he interrupted her by saying: "And as for your continuing there with that young fellow, Miss, do you see I thought it was as well let alone. As for an old man like me, why I may steal a pair of gloves perhaps; but what of that?—The world won't talk. Now a young fellow is quite another thing."

Agatha coloured, and felt a sensation of uneasiness entirely new to her. She was now sensible of the truth of Mr. Hammond's assertions, and of the kindness and generosity which had prompted him to urge her departure; and she began, for the first time, to believe

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believe that the world is sometimes what he and others had represented it.

Sir John, observing her confusion, said,
“ Come, come, Miss, don’t blush, and we’ll
“ say no more. Upon my credit and honour
“ as a gentleman, I did not mean to distress
“ you. Come, what say you?—If I *had* a
“ son to dispose of, what should you think
“ of Sir John Milson for a father?—Egad, I
“ don’t know, if my old Lady would but tip
“ off, what I might say to you myself!—
“ Hay?—you are as pretty a lass as I’ve seen
“ these forty years.”

Agatha, who knew not how to reply to this farrago of folly and vulgarity, was silent. But Sir John repeated his question, and declared he would be answered. “ Indeed, Sir,” said Agatha, “ I am quite a stranger to the
“ world and its customs; and know not
“ how I ought to reply to the compliments
“ paid me.”

“ I wish, Sir John,” said Miss Milson,
“ that you would not thus torment my lovely
“ friend immediately on her arrival.”

“ Torment her! Miss Sophy!” replied
Sir

Sir John. "No, no—nothing like it. Shew
" me the woman that's tormented when you
" talk to her of a husband!—"

"I could shew you an hundred," said Miss
Milson. "To a mind refined like Miss
" Belmont's the idea of an husband uncon-
" nected with every romantic tenderness of
" the most ardent passion would be dreadful.
" To an heart like hers even an exclusive
" preference would be insufficient."

"Exclusive fiddlestick!" said Sir John.
"My poor dear Miss Sophy when you once
" get into these flights the Lord have mercy
" upon those that hear you. I tell you, you'll
" all take the first man that offers; and have
" always done from grandmother Eve down
" to my Lady Milson—Indeed if Eve had
" been so mighty nice, I wonder where we
" should all have been."

Thus saying, and laughing heartily at his
own wit, he left them, to Agatha's great re-
lief; who, disgusted at the specimen she had
already seen, almost dreaded to meet the rest
of the family; and felt more reason than ever
to regret the society she had just quitted.—

The

She was now introduced to Lady Milson, whose kind reception, and frank good-nature made her feel immediately at ease in her company ; and, disposed as she was to be pleased with those she met, almost, she thought, atoned, for the coarse manners she was obliged to bear with from Sir John.

Lady Milson led her into the drawing room, which was filled with company, most of whom were making visits of some weeks to the family. The first of the party to whom she introduced her was the honourable Mr. Craggs, he being a person of the highest rank and most consequence. Mr. Craggs set down the pail of water he usually carried, and rising slowly, made a gentle inclination of the head.

Mr. Craggs was a little emaciated figure, about forty ; who, born to affluence and independence, and blest by nature with an excellent constitution, had lavished his fortune on empyrics, and ruined his health by fantastic endeavours to preserve it. Without having from nature one real ailment, he fancied an hundred ; to remove which he frequently employed

employed means which occasioned real ones. His darling, and, for many years past, his only studies, were medicine and philosophy as it concerns the human frame. By these means, what his physicians failed to accomplish was compleated by his own prescriptions ; and long before he was thirty, he had every appearance of one standing on the brink of the grave. He had discovered very early in life, that the pulse of one hand beat, by two in an hour, at least, faster than that of the other ; and convinced that an equal circulation was necessary to preserve life and health, by passing frequent electric shocks through one hand he endeavoured to promote and quicken the circulation, and by a poultice of nitre to impede it in the other. But, unfortunately, a severe frost setting in soon after, the nitre too effectually answered the end proposed ; and by that means brought on a mortification from which he was with difficulty recovered.—He had lately discovered that one half of his body was considerably heavier than the other ; and of this he was convinced by an inclination he felt to lean to
one

one side in preference to the other. To remedy this inconvenience, and to produce an equapoise, he constantly carried a pail of water on the lightest side.—A slight and gradual inclination of the head was the only species of bow he suffered himself to make. He was no stranger to the dreadful consequences of the slightest injury to the spinal marrow ; and he conceived it possible that every bend of the back, by forcing the vertebræ out of its natural, upright position, might be a means of weakening it, and injuring at the same time that marrow which had so intimate a connection with life itself. He therefore avoided a bow with as much caution as he would the plague.—Whenever the sun shone he wore a large hat in the form of an umbrella to preserve his eyes from its beams. If, as he would observe, light consists, as Newton has proved, of matter, be that matter ever so fine, be its particles ever so minute, it must endanger the sight on which it darts ; since its force is in proportion to its velocity, and its velocity calculated at the amazing rate of an hundred and fifty thousand miles in a second,

second. Besides, he observed, the contraction of the pupil in a strong light seems to point out to us from nature and instinct the fatal effects it experiences from it ; or why should that organ which has been supposed to be constructed for no other purpose than to profit by the light, by a natural impulse contract, and, as it were, shrink and retreat from its rays. And this was, he observed, the reason why the owl, a bird which discovers no other mark of especial sagacity, has nevertheless, from the instinctive prudence of closing its eyes in the light, been termed the bird of wisdom.— With these, and other arguments of a similar texture, Mr. Craggs entertained his friends, when he condescended to speak ; which, however, was not very frequently, as his mind was generally engrossed by the contemplation of his own complaints.

Mrs. Craggs, who accompanied him whithersoever he went, was the best of wives ; and, perhaps, the only woman who could have borne with his caprices without making a sacrifice of her own peace. But she was blest with an even, chearful temper ; and
cherishing

cherishing the idea of every merit she discovered in her husband, made it a subject of self congratulation. His foibles she smiled at, when his umbrella concealed her smiles from his view, combated when it was prudent, and humoured when she found it necessary.

The rest of the company consisted of Mr. Ormistace, his niece Mrs. Herbert, a young and beautiful widow, the object of Mr. William Milson's unsuccessful passion, Mr. Crawford, Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Milson, and the rest of Sir John's family.

Mr. Ormistace was a character, which, though not absolutely singular, is rarely met with ; and it is, perhaps, happy for the world that it is. He was an extraordinary mixture of virtue and foibles, genius and folly—kindness and cruelty ; and formed a striking proof that, the warmest and most generous of hearts, actions impelled by the most romantic virtue, are incapable of making ourselves and those around us happy, when not regulated by the standard of prudence, when not conformable to the dictates of cool sense and reason.

reason.—Liberal and profuse to an excess, if Mr. Ormistace heard of an object of distress, he would have beggared himself and every friend he had, to succour and relieve them. Yet his charities were too indiscriminate to afford real service. Acting by the impulse of the moment, it was enough that a pretty woman in distress, a man whose countenance interested him, or any other circumstance as trifling, worked upon his feelings: before he had given himself time to weigh the merits of their case, every resource was ransacked to supply them with all and more than they asked; while every remonstrance of his niece, or any other friend, who saw the circumstances through the clearer mediums of prudence and reason, were contemned, and themselves probably upbraided, and threatened with an eternal forfeiture of his regard. Passionately attached to all for whom he professed a friendship, he would have sacrificed his fortune and his life at any moment, to preserve them from distress; yet on the slightest grounds,—a tale fabricated by falsehood or malevolence, he would despise and discard them. This fea-

ture in his character will be best illustrated by the relation of a circumstance that occasioned the termination of a friendship, which, from extreme youth till the period when it arrived, had constituted his chief felicity.

Mr. Saville had been the companion of his childish sports, the associate of his studies; and as at school they began, so at the university they finished together their education. A diversity of sentiments and cast of character was no bar to their friendship. Saville, more volatile, and thinking more like the rest of the world, did not the less admire the heroic generosity which dignified his friend, and except a few slight disputes which had never amounted to an actual quarrel, they had continued friends and companions during twenty years; when Mr. Ormistace's misplaced charity, and the irritability of his generosity (if the expression may be allowed) occasioned their final separation.

A young woman beautiful in person, and interesting in her manner, called at Mr. Ormistace's lodgings, and requested immediate admittance. Struck with her appearance, he conjured to inform him by what means he could serve her.

“ Alas !

“Alas! Sir,” she said, “long, though,
“I trust, not deservedly so, a stranger to
“kindness, to find it thus in a stranger ex-
“cites a gratitude I feel better than I can
“express. My parents, though born to pros-
“pects of affluence, are now sunk in pover-
“ty and want; and the labour of my hands
“is insufficient to maintain them. I have a
“brother, who left us many years since to
“enlist as a soldier. We have been inform-
“ed of his return to his country; and in
“search of him, from the vague information
“given me by an acquaintance, I have wan-
“dered from town to town, till wearied with
“my fruitless attempts to discover him, and
“my little stock of money exhausted, I was
“advised to apply to you, whose generosity
“merits the praises I heard bestowed on it.”

“Excellent young woman!” said Mr.
Ormistace, “how much will suffice you?”

“A trifle, Sir,—a few pounds.”—

“Here are fifty. And have you applied
to no one else?”

“Only to Mr. Saville, Sir.”

“And what did my friend offer you?”

“Alas! nothing, Sir.”

“Nothing! Good God!”

“He disbelieved my sad tale, and refused
“to assist me.”

“Mean, distrustful wretch!—The man
“who could act thus is no longer a friend of
“mine—from this moment I discard him—
“renounce him for ever.”

“O Sir! Let me not be the means of di-
“viding you from your friend, or I shall be
“miserable that I applied to you. The
“world is filled with deceit, and he may
“have experienced but too many proofs of it
“already.”

“Excellent creature!—And you plead for
“the wretch that has insulted you by taxing
“you with the grossest falsehoods!—Saville
“my friend! I blush that I ever called him
“so!—But you shall not return on foot to
“your parents—my servants and horses shall
“attend you.”

“Ten thousand blessings light on you,
“kind, generous Mr. Ormistace!—Let me
“but leave you to indulge the fulness of my
“heart.”

“Do—

“Do—And return an hour hence; and
“my servants shall be ready to attend you.”

Scarcely was she gone, never to return again—since her brother, and, in short, her whole tale never had existence but in her own fertile imagination:—Mr. Ormistace’s known character, producing many such ideal adventures—when Mr. Saville called, and was denied admittance. Astonished at the refusal, and convinced that his friend was at home, he rushed in, in spite of the efforts of the servant.

“On his entrance, “Saville,” said Ormistace, “we meet now contrary to my inclination; but it is for the last time.”

“Dear Ormistace,” said Saville, “to what
“strange caprice am I indebted for this very
“polite reception?”

“Saville, I am serious. We meet no
“more. He who could insult injured and
“suffering innocence is no friend of mine.”

“O! I understand you now, perfectly.
“The suffering innocence you allude to, is
“the artful tale invented by the excellent
“actress who has honoured us both with a
“visit.”

“ Mean, suspicious wretch ! I have done
“ with you. Who that saw her tears, her
“ distress, could have withheld their boun-
“ ty ? ”

“ Those who knew the whole to be a fic-
“ tion. But if I could borrow a pair of
“ bright eyes, and were to put on petticoats
“ myself, I could impose on your credulity
“ at any hour.”

“ Saville,—I will not be ridiculed with
“ impunity. I will have satisfaction.”

“ Most certainly you will very shortly—of
“ your own folly.”

“ Do not affect to misunderstand me—
“ The satisfaction of a gentleman. We will
“ meet again ;—but it shall be”—

“ To fight ? ”

“ Yes—to fight ! ”

“ Ormistace, I have a sincere regard for
“ you, but I have some likewise for my own
“ life : and since it seems impossible to pre-
“ serve that, while I am destined to be the vic-
“ tim of your passion and caprice, we will
“ meet no more. But I will do justice to your
“ character, and if I am asked my opinion of
“ you,

“ you, I will say, that Jack Ormistace is an
“ honest, credulous, passionate, and worthy
“ fellow as ever existed !”

Thus saying, he left him ; and meeting accidentally with a party going to Rome, he accompanied them, rejoiced to leave a country where the man he most valued had renounced him, and not without hopes that his friend's eyes would soon be opened, that he would see and acknowledge his error, and seek to meet him on his return with as much eagerness as he had sought to part.

Mr. Ormistace *did* see his error. He was shortly convinced that the whole tale was a forgery ; and, in spite of his self-love, which was somewhat wounded by the concession, would gladly have flown to implore forgiveness of the man he had unjustly accused. But he was no longer within reach ; and a few days after his arrival at Rome, before a conciliatory letter from Ormistace could reach him, he was seized with a fever and died. — Mr. Ormistace never ceased to regret the loss of his friend ; yet his own character remained unchanged : rash and capricious

prepossessions still governed his conduct, and repeated convictions of their injustice were insufficient to prevent them.—He doated on Mrs. Herbert, yet made her life miserable.

Married at sixteen to a man whom she rather esteemed than loved, Mrs. Herbert had never known what it was to be happy. She had accepted him by the advice of her uncle, who encouraged an alliance which had every prospect of aggrandizing his niece. But adverse circumstances injuring Mr. Herbert's fortune, at the time he died he was possessed of so small a property as to necessitate his widow to accept the asylum Mr. Ormistace eagerly, and with the most unbounded kindness offered her. With him she had continued ever since ;—one hour admiring his liberality, the next suffering from his caprices. In short, she had daily reason to acknowledge, that a mere common character, destitute of genius or feeling, yet endued with that prudence which retains their conduct in the beaten track of common sense, must inevitably render those around them, if not more happy, certainly far less miserable, than
the

the wild actions of the votary of ungoverned passion, though that passion be prompted by virtue, and its aim be benevolence.

Far different from Mr. Ormistace was the worthy and excellent Mr. Crawford. He had all the sensibility necessary to render him kind and indulgent to the happy family around him; yet unaccompanied by those starts of passionate affection, those sudden gusts of tenderness, which rather pain than make us happy. Calm, unruffled, and serene, his mind was like the still lake—every object discoverable in it was just and beautiful. He sought out the afflicted, he pitied, and, as far as prudence would permit, relieved them. The widow and the orphan found an husband and a father in him; while his munificence to others endeared him to that wife and those children whom he considered as having the first and chiefest claim on his charity: on that charity, which, in St. Paul's excellent definition of it, "suffereth long, and is kind;" and without which, though he had given his all to the poor, it "had profited him no thing." Mild and benignant, a smile, the

smile of conscious rectitude, and the self-complacency of habitual virtue, sat on his face, and seemed an earnest of that peace which awaited him hereafter. There is something in the image of a truly good man which few can behold unmoved: we see him in the path which leads to Heaven, and our imagination already paints him enjoying the happiness prepared for the virtuous.

A silence of some minutes ensued when Agatha was seated, which was interrupted by Mr. Valentine Milson addressing Mr. Craggs:

“If it is not impertinent, Sir, may I ask the reason of the little nod of the head you gave that young Lady just now. I know I have heard that you have a reason for that as well as all the rest of your oddities.”

“My oddities, Sir!” said Mr. Craggs, somewhat piqued. “If it be a crime to take poison to shorten our lives, it is a crime not to take every possible means to preserve them.”

“Especially where they are so useful to the community,” returned Mr. Valentine laughing, and winking at the rest of the company.

pany. "But how may that little nod pre-
"serve your life?"

"It may preserve that on which my life
"depends. Homer was aware of this; for,
"speaking of the death of one of his cha-
"racters, he says,

"He broke his spinal joint, and wak'd in Hell."

"And you are afraid of waking there too,
"perhaps?"—

"You must be little acquainted with the
"ancients," said Mr. Craggs angrily, "if
"you are ignorant that hell was their term
"for the places of reward, as well as of pu-
"nishment in the other world."

"I have not read any of them since I left
"school, I confess, said Mr. Milson, but I
"read enough there to last me my life."

"But if you read none else, Galen and
"Hippocrates are surely worth your study."

"I do not recollect ever being introduced
"to those gentlemen. What may they treat
"of, pray?"

"Of medicine."

“ Medicine!—O horrid! I hate the very
“ name. A bafon of camomile tea, and, in
“ very desperate cafes, a little grated ginger,
“ is all the medicine I take, or ever was ac-
“ quainted with.”

“ Pitiful pride of ignorance!” faid Mr. Craggs, contemptuously; then returning to the reverie from which he had been awaked, he appeared in a moment loft to every thing but his own reflections.

“ Mr. Valentine Milfon,” faid Sir John, who obferved that Mr. Craggs had taken offence at his fon’s ridicule, “ I am amazed
“ that you talk in this free way to a man of
“ Mr. Craggs’s rank and confequence. Mr.
“ Craggs is the *honourable* Mr. Craggs, you
“ know; and may be more—he may be a
“ lord, fometime. Upon my honour and
“ credit, therefore, as a gentleman and a ba-
“ ronet, I muft fay, you behave very uncivil
“ and unpolite.”

“ With regard to politeneſs,” faid Mr. Valentine, “ I don’t pique myſelf upon it;
“ for I hate outſide. But with regard to
“ civility, plain Engliſh civility, yes, and
“ plain

“ plain English politeness too, I have enough
“ of both in conscience. What say you,
“ Nance ?” addressing Mrs. Milson.

“ I say,” answered Mrs. Milson, “ that if
“ you had no other good quality in a greater
“ degree than you possess politeness, you
“ would not be so estimable as I think you.”

“ Fie Nance, said he, that’s not the answer
“ I wanted. Mr. Ormistace do you speak
“ for me : you are often my advocate.”

“ Politeness,” said Mr. Ormistace, “ I
“ despise—’tis the borrowed polish with
“ which insincerity is varnished over, and be-
“ neath the notice of a man of worth. One
“ generous action, springing from the heart,
“ is superior in real value to the frivolity of
“ an whole life spent in external civility—
“ in affected courtesy.”

“ Yet do those generous actions you allude
“ to, preclude the practice of politeness ?”
said Mr. Crawford.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Ormistace ; “ for when
“ great actions employ and animate our
“ minds, trifles are contemned.”

“ I beg

“ I beg your pardon,” said Mr. Crawford; “ but it is not a trifle to contribute
“ to the innocent pleasure of those around us.
“ Many days must pass over our heads in
“ which we have it not in our power to
“ snatch a suffering family from want, to sacrifice our own to the dearer interests of
“ our friends. Yet need we not, like the
“ excellent Titus, lament the loss of a day,
“ when we may make even strangers pleased
“ with us, and contented with themselves by
“ urbanity and courtesy, not affected but real,
“ not springing from the lips but from the
“ heart. Is not every man a brother? Shall
“ we then think it beneath our notice to give
“ them pleasure?

“ To me there is no pleasure,” said Mr. Ormistace, “ in frothy compliments;” and
“ when a stranger is uncommonly civil to
“ me, I conclude that he is instigated by
“ artifice, or at least by vanity, hoping for
“ the same treatment in return.”

“ Frothy compliments,” said Mr. Crawford, “ are indeed the offspring of a little
“ mind; but polite and just praise is neither
“ beneath

“ beneath a man of sense to bestow nor to
“ receive. ’Tis a commerce of good will,
“ where each party is a gainer. And, with
“ regard to civility to strangers—he must be
“ narrow-minded and suspicious who ima-
“ gines every one he meets undeserving civi-
“ lity till time has convinced him of their
“ worth : rather let us believe every one me-
“ rits it, till time convinces us to the con-
“ trary ; which, for the honour of human
“ nature, will be, I trust, but rarely the case.
“ And if, when our hearts are touched, we
“ cannot withhold our bounty from a stranger,
“ why should we deny to those who want not
“ money, that civility which is due to all,
“ and from bestowing which we receive no
“ diminution of our stock.”

“ I have heard,” said Miss Milson, “ that
“ Charles the Second, from the superior grace
“ of his address, frequently gave more satis-
“ faction and pleasure while he denied, than
“ his father while he granted a favour.”

“ The remark is apposite,” said Mr. Craw-
“ ford, “ and proves the influence of polite-
“ nefs.”

“ Yes,”

“ Yes,” said Mr. Ormistace,” but its influence is no proof of its worth. Did not Charles the Second make use of that very politeness you contend for, to deceive, and to pay off those who asked his favours in the cheapest coin? And was he not in every respect a contemptible character?”

“ I grant it,” said Mr. Crawford; “ yet it was his licentiousness, not his politeness, which rendered him such; and if to the glaring vices he possessed, he had added the brutality of ill-manners, he would not have been a whit more respectable. But genuine politeness is one of the brightest ornaments to a man of real worth and integrity. It renders virtue itself more amiable, and, from dressing it in the most fascinating garb, gains many a proselyte to its cause. It is well known that Nelson, as he was one of the most moral and pious of men, studied to be likewise one of the politest.”

“ Virtue,” said Mr. Ormistace, “ should be loved and imitated for its own sake, not for the tinsel with which it is covered in order to recommend it to our view; such
“ glitter

“glitter can add no more to its intrinsic value, than the gilding on a piece of wood, which is still wood, however ornamented.”
“Miss Belmont, I observe,” said Mr. Crawford, “has been paying much attention to our arguments: she shall decide the contest.”

“Aye, aye,” said Sir John, “I dare say Miss can speak as prettily as she looks. What say you to it, Miss?”

“I have been endeavouring to profit by what I have heard,” said Agatha.

“But whose arguments agree with your own sentiments,” said Mr. Crawford. “I have the vanity to think that from your countenance during the last remark, you will be an advocate on my side.”

“I was wishing,” said Agatha, “instead of wood, rather to have compared virtue to silver, which, if it receive no additional value from the polish given to it, loses none, and acquires a beauty which recommends it to those who are ignorant of, or careless concerning its genuine worth.”

“My lovely friend has charmingly decided,”

“ded,” said Miss Milson; “and had Edgar,
“who is equally famous for clearing his
“country of wolves, and marrying the beau-
“ful Elfrida, seen and conversed with Miss
“Belmont, Ethelwald might have continued
“in peaceable possession of the wife and mi-
“stresses of his soul.”

A summons to supper terminated the conversation; and Agatha, though she yet regretted the loss of Mr. Hammond's society, which, in her present frame of mind, was more congenial to her heart than any other, yet rejoiced to find that all she met with were not like Sir John, and that there were some among the guests from whose conversation she might derive both pleasure and instruction.

The family retired to rest at an early hour, agreeable to Sir John's request, who thought it a good old English custom to be in bed before the clock struck ten.

Miss Milson accompanied Agatha to her apartment, which she informed her Mrs. Herbert had obligingly resigned to her, and had taken herself a remote one in the new building,

building, in order that Agatha, in an house both new and strange to her, might not be removed to a distance from the rest of the family. This apartment and her own adjoining it, Miss Milson informed her, had been finished agreeably to *her* taste, and had obtained much admiration from all who were so happy as to possess minds susceptible of romantic beauties.—Festoons of artificial flowers were hung around the room, tied together occasionally with pale blue satin ribbons. Round the posts of the bed, which were made to represent marble pillars, were entwined wreaths of myrtle.—The bed itself was in the form of an alcove, and covered entirely with flowers, except a large oval medallion of white satin in the centre of the tester, on which was painted a Venus descending from her chariot, and bearing in her own hands an alabaster vase, filled with some celestial liquid to refresh her weary doves: emblematic, as Miss Milson observed, “of that sensibility, and tender compassion which are the loveliest embellishments of beauty.” The dressing table, placed in a recess, and covered with spars and

and shells, was made to resemble a small grotto. The floor, carpetted with green velvet, was intended to imitate a grass plot, and small benches in lieu of chairs, covered with the same to represent hillocks; while the ceiling, painted in imitation of an evening sky, completed the "romantic beauties" of the apartment.

When Miss Milson had retired, Agatha, little disposed to sleep, her mind now filled with the contemplation of the novel objects around her, and now dwelling on the friend she had lost, and the friend she had left, took out her pencil and wrote the following lines.

Sweet were the scenes my fancy drew
As life just open'd to my view;
While sage experience vainly strove
To bid fair fancy cease to rove.
And is that fancy false as fair?
Are life's gay visions lost in air?
Alas! too soon this truth I know!
The sweetest flowers of hope fade ere they blow.
Maria! sister of my heart!
I met;—but only met to part—

To

To part—O agonizing pain !
Never on earth to meet again.
One other friend, how justly dear !
With whom to mix the sorrowing tear,
Was bliss more soothing to my heart
Than giddy mirth can e'er impart.
I met—I saw—my soul approv'd,
His sorrows wept, His virtues lov'd.
In him 'twas sweet—how sweet to trace
The semblance of Maria's face !
And still, as friendship lent her balm,
By gentle arts his grief to calm,
To hush his many cares to rest,
And blest—blest task ! to make him blest.
From him alas ! ordain'd to part,
Who now can cheer my drooping heart ?
Condemn'd this fatal truth to know,
The fairest flowers of hope fade ere they blow.

In youth especially, there is something soothing to the heart when it is under the influence of any distress, either not in its nature too violent to admit of such a relief, or softened by time till it is enabled to bear it, in expressing our feelings in poetry : requiring some little reflection in the choice and arrangement of words, it calls our attention
in

in some measure from the subject next our heart, at the very moment in which we seem to indulge in it; and Agatha's heart felt lightened of a part of its burthens when she had thus indulged herself in expressing them. Not intending the effusions of her solitary hours for the perusal of any one, and considering what she had written of no farther value than as it served to amuse her mind and chase the painful reflections which oppressed it, she put it carelessly into her pocket, and was preparing to undress, when she was startled by a voice under her window. She was alarmed at first; but recollecting herself, and reflecting that she might probably have no cause for terror, she went to the window and softly opened it to listen, when she heard a man's voice repeating some verses in a tremulous tone. She listened more attentively, and as the same few lines were frequently repeated, could distinguish the following.

He, in whose wretched hut chill want prevails,
In dreams, each luxury of wealth may gain;
And the wan victim whom disease assails
Enjoys in sleep, a short relief from pain.

No blessings light on *my* devoted head,
For Emma frowns—and hope, and sleep are fled!

The voice ceased; and the person, after heaving a profound sigh, walked with hasty steps towards another part of the garden.—Alas! said Agatha, I then am not the only person who wakes at this hour to utter their complaints and bewail their sorrows!—but what are mine compared to the despair expressed by this unhappy being!—Yes—this it must be to love. Thus it was that my mother painted that fatal passion; and her colouring was but too just. Heaven be praised my heart is a stranger to it, and will ever, I trust, remain so. In my bosom friendship has filled the space too often occupied by love. In friendship all my wishes are centred—all my hopes might be compleated and divided for ever from my first friend, could I but enjoy the society of her brother, my heart would bear every other privation with resignation—happy in him who only can supply his sister's place in my affection.

Agatha now shut the window; and having commended herself to the protection of Heaven,
ven,

ven, went to rest, with an heart, if not happy, at least free from that anguish, which any the least failure in our duty occasions; and which is perhaps the most poignant of human afflictions.

CHAP. IV.

SLEEPING rather later than ordinary in the morning she was awakened by Miss Milson and Mrs. Herbert who came with much kindness to enquire how she had rested. She informed them of the verses she had heard repeated under her window.

“ Ah,” said Miss Milson, “ the ill-fated
“ writer and repeater of those verses was my
“ poor brother William, whose attachment
“ to this cruel lady is too well known for
“ any proofs he may give of it to excite
“ surprize.

“ I wish,” said Agatha, “ that Mrs. Herbert pitied him as much as I do; and
“ though he dared not hope to be beloved,
“ that, at least, would be a consolation.”

“ If

“ If my pity could console or make him
“ happy,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ there would
“ not be at this moment an happier being
“ upon earth. My heart bleeds for his dis-
“ tress; and scarcely does he suffer more se-
“ verely than I do from his unfortunate par-
“ tiality. Did not daily experience convince
“ us of their existence, I could not believe it
“ possible there could be such a being in na-
“ ture as a coquette: a woman who finds
“ pleasure in exciting a love she neither can
“ nor is desirous to return.”

“ Certainly,” said Miss Milson, “ malice
“ itself can accuse you of no fault concerning
“ my brother; for you have never given the
“ smallest encouragement to his hopes.”

“ Never,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ and I
“ should despise myself if I had. I have even
“ forced myself to suppress the gratitude and
“ esteem I felt, lest he should give them a
“ more tender interpretation. Yet in spite of
“ every effort of mine to destroy it, his passion
“ continues; and but yesterday I found in
“ my work-box a fragment of his writing.”

“ Poor William,” said Miss Milson, “ the
Vol. I. E “ fictitious

“ fictitious sorrows of a Werter are nothing
“ compared to his real ones. Henry the eighth
“ did not love Anne Boleyn with a passion so
“ ardent? and finding his only consolation
“ in poetry, as the elegant Pope has expressed
“ it :

“ His heart still dictates, and his hand obeys.”

“ May I ask to see the verses you mentioned,” said Agatha ; “ my heart feels an
“ interest in his distresses.”

“ Surely,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ nor do I
“ give you any proof of confidence by communicating them; since others, equally
“ tender, are found and read by every servant about the house. He was at Oxford,
“ where, in hopes of amusing his mind, his
“ friends had persuaded him to spend a few
“ weeks; and hearing by accident that I was
“ expected at Milson Hall, he set off immediately, though it was then eleven at night,
“ and arrived here the day before I came. I
“ mention this, as it explains the journey to
“ which he alludes in the lines you wished
“ to read. By the shortening or lengthening
“ his

“ his lines occasionally, he often takes liberties,
 “ ties, perhaps not licenced by the rules of
 “ poetry ; but where the heart is deeply affected,
 “ our feelings are apt to run away
 “ with us; and it is difficult to confine our
 “ metre within its just limits.”

Mrs. Herbert then gave to Agatha the following lines,

FRAGMENT.

And then—when borne upon my bier
 Say, will not Emma shed *one* tear ?
 Yes—she will then my fate deplore !
 And fame shall tell my tale the village o’er,
 Then haply as some rural maid
 Shall hear, beneath yon pensive shade,
 Some friend my ill-starr’d love relate,
 She’ll ask—while weeping o’er my fate—
 “ And did he journey many a mile
 “ To steal one look—to catch one smile ?”
 “ Alas ! he did.”
 “ And did he love so long, so true,
 “ Without one cheering hope in view ?”
 “ Alas ! he did.”

“ And did he such a love relate ?

“ And *could* she after prove ingrate ?”

“ Alas ! she did.”

She'll pause—and heave a pitying sigh,

And then forswear all cruelty.

And thus my hapless fate shall prove

A blessing to another's love.

“ His unfortunate passion interests me extremely,” said Agatha ; “ and these artless lines, which appear to be written in the moments of real anguish, without effort or study, affect me yet more than the melancholy ones I heard last night. How bitter are the agonies of love !”

“ You speak feelingly, my dear,” said Mrs. Herbert.

“ Not from my own feelings, indeed,” said Agatha ; “ for I am an utter stranger to it ; and friendship has hitherto proved so delightful, that I shall never sigh to exchange it for what I believe the most dreadful of sufferings.”

“ Certainly,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ where love, as in the present unfortunate instance, cannot be requited, its sufferings are dreadful ;

“ful ; but where it meets no obstacle, when
“it is returned with equal tenderness, it
“forms perhaps the happiest state of human
“existence : it enhances every blessing, soft-
“ens every pain, and opens a little Heaven
“of happiness to our view. To all that was
“before pleasing it gives additional charms,
“even the fair face of nature appears fairer
“when viewed in the presence of those we
“love. It gives a thousand innocent and
“artless sources of delight unknown before
“—gives value to a thousand before indiffe-
“rent things : to select flowers, gather fruit,
“perform innumerable otherwise insignifi-
“cant offices for those we love, is infinitely
“sweet ; while every trifle they have possessed
“or prized becomes a treasure. Then, selfish-
“ness, the most degrading of human fail-
“ings, is annihilated by love : since every
“idea of self-gratification is despised when
“put in competition with the wishes or hap-
“piness of the object of our affection.”

“You amaze me,” said Agatha. “How
“unlike is this to my Mother’s dreadful de-
“lineations on the same subject ! But then

“ jealousy is its inseparable companion ; and
“ jealousy *is* dreadful.”

“ Jealousy is so far from being the inseparable companion of love,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ that I much doubt whether they ever inhabited the same bosom. Jealousy supposes a mistrust of the sincerity of those we love ; and that want of sincerity implies art and dissimulation (failings incompatible with virtue) and we can only truly love what we believe at least to be virtuous. I speak of real, pure, disinterested love—of love too that is requited ; for then only can it make us happy, then only can it be free from jealousy.”

“ And why,” said Agatha, “ have I been thus deceived ? For what end can I have been taught to dread, what, from your charming description, appears the sweetest source of human felicity ?”

“ Probably,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ Lady Belmont observed the natural tenderness of your disposition ; and, knowing that love and duty are sometimes at variance, feared that, in an heart susceptible as yours appears

“ pears to be, love, if indulged, might prove
“ the conqueror.”

“ Ah!” said Agatha, “ how little then did
“ she know my heart! How little know the
“ principles firmly and immoveably implant-
“ ed in it by the best and dearest of friends!
“ In every circumstance, in every trial of my
“ life, nothing shall tempt me to a breach of
“ duty. And were I to love with all the ten-
“ derness you have pourtrayed, and did my
“ love promise a life of the most enchant-
“ ing happiness, yet, while that and my
“ duty pointed different ways, duty should
“ be my constant guide; and I am firmly
“ resolved that no consideration of self-fe-
“ licity shall ever prompt me to forsake it
“ for a moment.”

“ Charming! ” said Miss Milson.
“ Spoken with the energy of a Clementina,
“ and the courage of a Philippa.”

“ Heaven forbid,” said Mrs. Herbert,
“ that you should ever be put to the trial.
“ No—I hope I shall one day see you, your
“ love, wherever it is fixed, authorized and
“ approved by your parents, and yourself

“blest and blessing! And little as I have
“hitherto known you, I need not hesitate to
“foretell, that “happy will be the man who
“shall make you his wife, and happy the
“child who shall call you mother.”

Agatha received Mrs. Herbert's praises with equal gratitude and pleasure; and after exchanging mutual wishes, that an acquaintance thus *sweetly*, as Agatha termed it, commenced, might improve into the tenderest and most lasting of friendships, she felt herself happier than the evening before she had imagined it possible to have felt; deprived by death of one friend, and by absence of another.

When Agatha was dressed, Mrs. Herbert, Miss Milson, and herself went together into the breakfast room. The company were all assembled, and Lady Milson already seated at the head of the table.

“Come in Ladies—come in—” said Sir John; “and the more haste you make the
“better; for my Lady Milson there has al-
“ready swallowed two plates full of hot toast
“and butter.”

“I am

“ I am amazed, Sir John,” said Lady Milson, “ when you know the extreme badness of my appetite, that you will always be talking thus. You ought rather to rejoice when I can get down a little bit.”

“ Well, for certain,” said Sir John, “ though I am sorry to say it for my own sake, but for certain Lady Milson was never in love ; for love, they say, takes away the appetite, and I never knew hers leave her for an hour. There’s poor William now, could not get down a mouthful if you’d make him a lord or a baronet for it.”

Mr. William Milson, who dreaded being ridiculed on the subject of his passion, made no reply ; but walked leisurely out of the room, apparently inattentive to what was said. As he went out, happening to take out his handkerchief, he dropped a paper from his pocket, which Sir John observing as soon as he was gone, took up, and declared he would read aloud for the edification of the company. Mrs. Herbert looking uneasy, Miss Milson requested him to give it to her ; but he was but the more determined to keep

it, and declared, that that pretty little widow, whose coyness had occasioned its being written, should be punished by hearing it read to the company. Every one present unanimously refused to hear it, and Sir John was obliged to desist; declaring, however, that he would take a fly peep at it himself—when, to his utter surprize, and Mrs. Herbert's great relief, the paper was a blank one. He then said, that to make them amends for the loss of their entertainment he would tell them a story.

“ You must know ladies and gentlemen,” he began, “ that I was once desperately in love with my lady there; for she was really a very pretty woman——”

“ Yes, Sir John,” interrupted Lady Milson, “ you never had any beauty in your family till *I* came into it.”

“ None the worse for that neither my Lady,” said Sir John; “ for if we were not a handsome, we were always a prudent money-getting family; and I don't know any thing that's so pretty to look at as King George's head upon a guinea: it beats
“ your

“ your Ladyship’s all to nothing—pretty as
“ you might be. But I was going to say, that
“ I had a mind to give my lady some verses;
“ and never having tried at any thing of
“ the sort myself, I thought it best to get
“ some ready made; and so, meeting with a
“ ballad with something about blue eyes in
“ it, I thought that bid fair to suit as well
“ as any thing, and bought it for her. Now
“ I was determined to get it a bargain; and
“ as the wench asked me a penny for it, I
“ tumbled a bad halfpenny that had hung a
“ hand a long time, into the dirt; and when
“ it was all covered with mud that it could
“ not be distinguished from a good one, pick-
“ ed it up, and gave it to her, declaring that
“ it was the sight of her bright eyes that
“ made me drop it. This put her in good
“ humour; and as she was really a pretty
“ girl, I stole a kiss of her. And so, I
“ bought a verse to please my Lady, passed
“ off a bad halfpenny, and got a kiss of a
“ pretty lass, and all at one stroke. And
“ now, upon my honour and credit as a
“ gentleman and a baronet, I don’t think
“ it was amiss.”

“ The plan and execution were both admirable,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ and well worthy of Sir John Milson ; and I do not believe there is another gentleman in the country who could boast of such an exploit, and then vouch for its merit upon his honour.”

“ I don’t believe there is indeed,” said Sir John, interpreting what had been said as a compliment. “ But come now Mrs. Herbert, do shew us some of those love-sick ditties.”

“ Had I any to shew to you,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ I should imagine it would be neither to your honour nor credit as a gentleman and a baronet, to make either your son or your guest an object of ridicule.”

“ Why that’s no how,” said Sir John.—

“ Come,” said Mr. Crawford, “ excuse Mrs. Herbert’s communicating what would give her pain ; and since one poem may perhaps be as amusing as another, I will repeat some lines which were sent to Miss Lydia Travers, a maiden lady with whom I was once acquainted. She had been left
“ early

“ early in life at her own disposal, with some
“ beauty, some accomplishments, and an am-
“ ple fortune. It was probable that, pos-
“ sessed of so many recommendations, she
“ would have many admirers; but, for dif-
“ ferent reasons, none of them happening to
“ meet with her approbation, she saw herself,
“ at five and forty, Miss Lydia Travers still.
“ She then began to think it was time to set-
“ tle in the world, and hinted as much to
“ some of her acquaintance; which being
“ circulated abroad, induced a Mr. Nichols, a
“ young man who had dissipated his fortune
“ by gaming and extravagance, to determine
“ upon proposing to her as the easiest means
“ of repairing it. He therefore became very
“ assiduous, and had reason to believe he was
“ not disagreeable to the lady; but remark-
“ ing that she had rather a romantic turn, and
“ imagining that an elegant poem would
“ compleat the conquest, already more than
“ begun, he applied to Mr. Moreland, a dis-
“ tant relation of Miss Travers's, who dur-
“ ing many years had procured a precarious
“ subsistence by his pen, to write one in his
“ name,

“ name, having no skill in composition him-
“ self. Mr. Moreland had, in his youth,
“ been a sincere admirer of his cousin, and
“ would have solicited her hand, but that,
“ from the scorn with which his attentions
“ were received, he was convinced it would
“ be to no purpose. Considering his passion
“ hopeless, and fearing to augment it, he
“ very prudently shunned every place where
“ he had any prospect of meeting her, till
“ time had totally effaced her image from his
“ heart. Calamities, equally unforeseen and
“ unmerited, having deprived him of his
“ small paternal inheritance, writing was at
“ last become his only resource. When Mr.
“ Nichols made the application to him, he
“ enquired if he felt himself greatly attached
“ to Miss Travers.”

“ Attached to her,” said Nichols,—“ what
“ the devil do you mean?—Why she’s five
“ and forty!—”

“ Then what can induce you to pursue
“ with so much earnestness a woman whose
“ age renders her contemptible in your
“ eyes?”

“ What

“ What induce me! Why what always
 “ does induce a young man to take an old
 “ woman?—Want—Sir—want.—”

“ Good God! and would you marry her
 “ merely to support you?”

“ Merely. Matrimony is a devilish hard
 “ pill to swallow; but when it is well co-
 “ vered with gold, it *is* better than a bul-
 “ let:—and one or t’other I must have.”

“ Well, be satisfied,” said Moreland, “ you
 “ shall have the verses. You would have
 “ them written I suppose as if addressed to
 “ a young person?”

“ By all means,” said Nichols; “ as com-
 “ plimentary and as sublime too as possi-
 “ ble.”

“ Mr. Moreland accordingly wrote these
 “ lines which he brought to Nichols for his
 “ approbation.”

“ Yes Lydia—Thou an Angel art
 “ In form, in face, in mind, in heart,
 “ All that a poet could desire
 “ To animate a muse of fire.
 “ Such charms no painter’s art could reach,
 “ No sage’s skill such wisdom teach—

“ Prudence

" Prudence with gaiety combin'd,
 " Strong sense with melting softness join'd.
 " Thy beauty might a stoic move,
 " And warm his frozen soul to love!
 " Yet love still check'd by all that fear
 " Which seems to speak an Angel near,
 " Till one kind smile dispell'd the pain,
 " And shew'd the woman once again.
 " Give but one hope thou may'st be mine
 " All else with transport I'll resign—
 " Each thought by day, each dream by night
 " Shall own this source of dear delight,
 " Priz'd as the miser's darling self,
 " Cherish'd as hopes of Heav'n itself!
 " Lydia—you blush—look pleas'd, and smile—
 " Vain fool! I'm laughing at you all this while."

" Mr. Nichols took the lines, and having
 " read to

" Prudence with gaiety combin'd,"
 exclaimed eagerly, " enough—enough. This
 " will do the business; I need read no far-
 " ther. Here—take and fold it up."

" This was instantly done; and it was seal-
 " ed, superscribed, and sent to the lady im-
 " mediately. But how great was Nichols's
 " astonishment,

“ astonishment, when at his next visit he was
“ denied admission. Fearing that the lady
“ had detected the imposition, and was ap-
“ prized that the poem was not actually of
“ his own writing, he sent her the next
“ morning a very polite note, assuring her,
“ that however report might have belied
“ him, the verses were every line his own
“ composition ; when, to his utter confusion,
“ this letter was returned to him, after be-
“ ing opened, enclosed in a blank cover.
“ After this, hopeless of success, he aban-
“ doned the scheme as fruitless, and endea-
“ voured, by other means, equally justifiable,
“ to support himself. Mr. Moreland, in the
“ mean time, who had no selfish views in
“ writing the verses in question, and only
“ hoped by this means to preserve a woman
“ he had once loved, and whose remembrance
“ was still dear to him, from misery and ruin,
“ met her accidentally at the house of a
“ friend. Time, which had greatly injured
“ her beauty, had not yet entirely destroyed
“ it, and had left remains enough to remind
“ Moreland of what she had once been,
“ and

“ and what he had once felt ; and, in his
“ idea, her mind had gained all that her face
“ had lost. Miss Travers, who saw him at
“ a moment when she was animated by pique
“ towards another, was disposed to be pleas-
“ ed with him, and by her manner easily in-
“ duced him to make the offer he had not
“ dared to venture upon twenty years before.
“ He was accepted, and the remainder of
“ his days were terminated in the ease and
“ competence he deserved, while his con-
“ duct towards his wife gave her every reason
“ to rejoice in the choice she had made.
“ Nichols, whom she had thus fortunately
“ escaped, did not break his heart in con-
“ sequence of his disappointment ; yet, be-
“ lieving that the verses gained the lady, la-
“ mented bitterly that “ the Gods had not
“ made him poetical.”

“ The story is whimsical,” said Mr. Or-
mistace ; “ but tells very little to the cre-
“ dit of either of the parties. Mr. More-
“ land’s conduct in deceiving the man who
“ employed and paid him is unjustifiable ;
“ and instead of praises, his duplicity enti-
“ tles him to contempt.”

“ You

“ You are certainly right,” said Mr. Crawford; “ no benefit expected to be the result, “ can justify deceit. Yet though the end “ may not absolutely excuse the means, his “ motives were surely laudable. Certain that “ advice in such cases, even when asked, is “ rarely followed, he took the only method “ by which he could preserve the lady from “ the misery which awaited her; and not “ till he was convinced that Nichols’s views “ were merely mercenary, did he wish or intend to impose upon him. So far from it “ —I am convinced from his known character, that had he discovered his professions “ of regard to be sincere, and had imagined “ there was a probability of his rendering “ her happy, he would rather have promoted “ than impeded the match.”

“ You say,” said Mrs. Milson, “ that “ nothing can justify deceit; yet are there “ not particular situations besides the one “ just related, where we may use it with advantage and without a crime—where it “ can do no injury and may afford much service?”

“ None—

"None—none," said Mr. Ormistace.

"It is always dangerous," said Mr. Crawford, "and may be often hurtful; and since, if we allow that it can ever with propriety be used, every one may imagine their own situation to be the precise one which admits it, it will be both wiser and better to proscribe it entirely."

After breakfast the party separated till dinner. Miss Milson, her sister, Mrs. Herbert, and Agatha, went to Miss Milson's *Cassetta*, Mrs. Milson to the nursery, her ladyship to her household management, and the gentlemen to their various amusements.

When dinner had assembled them all again, a ceremony took place, which, if made less public, would have raised Sir John in Agatha's estimation. Before the company began their dinner, several large plumb puddings were brought in and placed on a side table, with as many jugs of ale. Sir John himself went to the table, and began to fill several plates with the pudding, and to pour ale into several mugs which were brought him—

at

at the same time calling to the servants
 “ bring me Stephen Martin’s plate and his
 “ mug—are these them ?”

“ Yes Sir.”

“ And now Thomas Bayley’s. Is this his
 “ plate, and his mug ?”

“ Yes Sir.”

“ There, now bring me Betty and Jemima
 “ Simmonds’s.”

Lady Milson, in the mean time, took this opportunity of informing her visitors, that there were a great number of poor people in their village, who would not know how to live but for Sir John’s charity ; and that he made it a rule whatever company he might have, never to omit sending them some pudding and ale at least seven or eight times in a year ; and that Betty and Jemima Simmonds, whom he had now been so kind as to add to the number, had been very unfortunate of late ; that poor Betty had lost entirely the use of her limbs for some years ; and that Jemima, her grand-daughter, because she would not leave her, had refused to marry a young man she liked, who had since enlisted
 in

in the army, and the poor girl was believed to be in a consumption.

“How amiable would be any acts of this kind,” said Agatha, low to Mrs. Herbert, “were they done more privately: but I have always been taught, that charity, when purposely displayed, loses its reward.”

“*This* does not,” said Mrs. Herbert; “for our host has every reward *he* desires, when his charity obtains the knowledge, and, as he imagines, the consequent approbation of his guests:—for he is a stranger to the pure rewards which flow from the sweet consciousness of secret benevolence, and the approbation of Him by whom alone our charities should be seen. His conduct, however, affords many excellent lessons; and I never quit this house without feeling armed against the failings of its inhabitants. We meet here with some characters, which, if they serve not as examples, are yet of use as beacons to warn us of our own danger; and from witnessing their odiousness in others, we learn to despise ostentation, meanness, and
“ the

“ the contemptible pride of the *little great* man.”

A silence on the part of the rest of the company obliged Mrs. Herbert to terminate her remarks ; much to Agatha's regret, who listened to her with unfeigned pleasure.

Nothing remarkable occurred during the remainder of the day ; but Agatha, whom the rough sketch Lady Milson had drawn of Jemima Simmonds, had interested extremely, determined to rise early the next morning to endeavour to discover her little abode, and to visit, relieve, and comfort her if possible.

Her mind impressed with this idea, she awoke early in the morning, dressed herself hastily, and went down stairs, intending to enquire of some of the servants the road to the cottage. For this purpose, she went into the breakfast room, thinking it probable she might find some one there, when to her equal surprise and delight, she was met by Mr. Hammond.

“ Mr. Hammond,” said Agatha, holding out her hand to him with an expression of the most

most ingenuous joy, "how happy am I to
" meet you! thus unexpectedly too—it
" heightens the pleasure! And are you
" well?—And have you obeyed all my
" injunctions?"

" 'Dear—dear Miss Belmont!' said Ham-
mond, " to have *you* thus interested for
" me, surely I must be the happiest of
" beings!——"

" I would you were!" said Agatha. " But
" are you indeed happier, more composed
" than when I left you?"

" At this moment," said Hammond,
catching her hand, forgetful of every thing,
" at this moment there is not—" Then re-
collecting himself he loosed her hand as haf-
tily as he had taken it.

" I fear, O I fear," said Agatha, " from
" this manner, this impetuous manner, that
" you are not yet yourself; that your spirits,
" when deprived of the consolation of the
" friend whom Providence threw in your
" way, have returned to that state of agita-
" tion and misery from which her efforts re-
" covered them. But O! let me conjure you
" to

“ to be comforted ! Be assured that there is
“ not on earth a friend more sincerely at-
“ tached to another, and that you cannot be
“ unhappy without rendering me so.”

“ Dear—dear Agatha—Miss Belmont—
“ Angel ! what shall I, can I say to such un-
“ exampled proofs of kindness !” exclaimed
Hammond. “ Yes, far—very far from be-
“ ing unhappy at this moment—this sweet
“ moment—the generous interest you take in
“ my behalf, makes me insensible of sorrow—
“ insensible of every thing but the blessing of
“ being thus regarded by the loveliest—dear-
“ est of women—of friends !——”

Agatha coloured she knew not why, and felt a momentary embarrassment for which she knew not how to account, from the warmth and energy of his expressions. After a short pause, during which her mind recovered its serenity, she determined to change the subject ; imagining that her ill-judged reference to a distress, which had perhaps grown upon him during her absence, had occasioned the emotion she had just witnessed. She then spoke of her new friend Mrs. Her-

bert, of the pleasure she received from her society, and that of the excellent Mr. Crawford, whom she equally esteemed ; and Hammond gave her a letter from Lady Belmont which had arrived late the evening before ; and which, though he came purposely to bring, in the first impulse of pleasure at meeting her, and the emotion her artless expressions of tenderness had excited, he had totally forgotten. The letter was written before the news of Miss Hammond's death had reached Lady Belmont, and contained nothing more than expressions of anxiety concerning her health, an assurance that she would return to England as soon as their business was completed, and a wish that Agatha would profit as little as possible by any indulgence Miss Hammond might give her of mixing with a society from which she might contract much evil, could derive no benefit, and which, however fair in its exterior, was the source of constant uneasiness to all who were weak enough to mingle with it.—Agatha gave the letter to Mr. Hammond to read, expressing, at the same time, her surprise that her

her mother should never yet have been undeceived concerning the world of which she had formed so erroneous an opinion, and she pitied the prejudice which had doubtless abridged her of many of the pleasures of life.

Mrs. Herbert, whom the same project had occupied as Agatha, now came into the room; and Agatha, who had learned from nature all that the factitious ceremonies of politeness enjoin, introduced her to Mr. Hammond, and Hammond to her, with an expression of infinite pleasure. Mrs. Herbert's intention being now frustrated for the present as well as Agatha's, and thinking that she could not in politeness leave them immediately, she determined to defer her benevolent visit till the next morning.

After a short conversation, during which Mrs. Herbert's penetrating eye easily remarked the pleasure which sparkled in Agatha's, the family assembled, and Miss Milson introduced Mr. Hammond to Sir John, who met him with a kind of formal half-civility. Miss Milson, who was much interested in his favour, and who knew from long experi-

ence, the only road to her father's approbation, observed, that she had heard her late good friend Miss Hammond remark, that there was a baronet of the name and family of Hammond, and that the title was not very far distant from her brother had he been living, which she then knew not that he was.

"Indeed?" said Sir John, "why that's a very pretty thing! Pray Mr. Hammond, Sir, (I am sure I am very happy to see you here) is it far distant?"

"O yes Sir," said Hammond, "a distant cousin, I believe—indeed I scarcely know."

"But has he any sons," said Sir John, hastily.

"Upon my word, I don't know—I believe not——."

"You believe not? Then very likely you'll have it; and if you settle in the neighbourhood, I hope we shall be very good friends. Sir John Milson will always be happy to see Sir——(What is your name, pray?—) Hammond."

"Edward. But indeed Sir John I have not the most distant idea——."

"O Sir

“O Sir Edward Hammond—” said Sir John, interrupting him, “Sir Edward Hammond. And very well it sounds. But before that arrives, I shall always be happy, very happy to see you; and as your house must be dull at present, I must insist upon your coming to me for some time. The sight of these pretty ladies will do you good.”

Mr. Hammond excused himself; but Sir John would take no denial; and Hammond, who could not but rejoice in the opportunity it afforded him of enjoying the sweet, though, he began to fear, dangerous indulgence of Agatha's society, at length consented to remain with him a few days.

CHAPTER V.

THE party divided for the pursuits of the morning nearly as they had done the day before; Hammond, at Miss Milford's request, joining the ladies in the Cassetta, and being appointed by her to turn over, as she

termed it, "the storied page for their amusement; while their needles or pencils would delineate fairy scenes, not less beautiful than those of the poet or novelist."

Mrs. Herbert and Agatha happening to walk a small distance before the rest,—“You know not,” said Agatha to Mrs. Herbert, “how elated my heart feels this morning.”

“I can *partly* imagine it,” said Mrs. Herbert, archly.

“To meet,” resumed Agatha, “thus unexpectedly too, a friend after so long an absence——.”

“So long an absence, my dear?” said Mrs. Herbert; “surely you are one of those whom time creeps withal! If I am not mistaken, you parted from Mr. Hammond no longer ago than the day before yesterday?”

“That is true,” said Agatha; “yet a day appears long when divided from a friend.”

“Certainly it does—when divided from a friend!” said Mrs. Herbert, significantly.

Agatha,

Agatha, who understood Mrs. Herbert as literally as she herself had spoken, paid little regard to her manner, and continued. "When time shall have a little matured *our* friendship, my dear Mrs. Herbert, I shall feel equal sorrow at parting from, and equal pleasure at meeting *you*."

"That you will feel some pain at parting from, and some pleasure at meeting me, I firmly believe," said Mrs. Herbert, "but whether you will feel as much pain, and as much pleasure as you have now experienced is a doubt with me—or rather, is no doubt at all."

Miss Milson, Miss Cassandra, and Hammond overtaking them, the conversation was changed to other subjects.

When they arrived at the Cassetta, it was some time before the book to be read could be decided upon: Miss Milson descanting so long upon the various beauties of Pope and Milton, and the edification and delight to be derived from historical study, that it was impossible to determine on which she would at last fix her choice; when Mrs. Herbert took

down from the shelves a volume of Shakespeare, who, she said, was equally the pride and darling of every English breast; and opening to the *Tempest*—"Here," Mr. Hammond, she said, "read this. I have lately met with two characters resembling, as I fancied, Miranda, and Ferdinand; and I wish from hearing them again to decide whether the likeness was real or imaginary."

Hammond read as desired, and Agatha listened with the most attentive pleasure. She felt every sentiment as it was uttered; and though she had repeatedly read the play, and had always been delighted with it, she declared, when he had done, that she never was before so sensible of its many beauties; and that she was now convinced of what she had always believed, that a play, when read aloud, if any attention be paid to varying the voices of its characters, gives much more pleasure than when read alone.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Herbert; "and a comedy especially. Laughter is not a solitary amusement; and when any thing ex-
cites

"cites it, we wish to have sharers in our
 "mirth. Mr. Hammond has besides done
 "ample justice to his task; and I can assure
 "him, that, like Miss Belmont, I have dis-
 "covered beauties which I wonder I should
 "have overlooked before."

"I think," said Miss Cassandra, "that the
 "prettiest part of all was the scene between
 "Stephano and Trinculo."

"I was most delighted with that charming
 "though well-known speech of Prospero's,"
 said Miss Milson, "that the globe and all
 "which it inherit shall dissolve."

"It is equally sublime and beautiful," said
 Mrs. Herbert; "and, like many other of
 "Shakespeare's images, rather gains than loses
 "by repetition. Which is your favourite
 "speech, Miss Belmont?"

"I scarcely know how to decide," said
 Agatha, "where I have found so many
 "that have charmed me; yet Ferdinand's
 "address to Miranda,

————— I do beseech you

(Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers)

What is your name?

“ is, I think, most strikingly beautiful. In
“ a few words it speaks the purity and since-
“ rity of his heart: He wishes to know her
“ name that he may implore every blessing
“ for her.”

“ You have exactly my sentiments, in this
“ respect,” said Mrs. Herbert; “ and there
“ cannot be a tender of affection where every
“ idea of self is more completely renounc-
“ ed.”

“ Friendship, love, and every generous af-
“ fection of the human soul,” said Ham-
mond, “ were implanted by Heaven, and
“ to Heaven they assist in leading us, prompt
“ our virtues, and encrease our devotions.
“ He, whose cold heart never knew an ob-
“ ject of tenderness, never felt a wish which
“ had another’s happiness in view, can be lit-
“ tle sensible of that holy ardour which in-
“ spires us, when, at the Throne of Omni-
“ potence, we implore blessings on those
“ who are dear to us—dearer than our-
“ selves !”

“ Can that be?” said Miss Cassandra. “ Is
“ there any body one can love better than
“ oneself?”

“ Many

“ Many,” said Hammond; “ and every
 “ one whose heart is capable of attachment,
 “ prizes the object of that attachment be-
 “ yond himself; would on every occasion
 “ prefer their happiness to his own, nor he-
 “ sitate were it necessary to sacrifice his life
 “ for them. Those who are incapable of
 “ this, are incapable of true affection. “ For
 “ none of us liveth to himself.”

“ Eleonora, Queen to Edward the First,
 “ surnamed Long-shanks, was an instance of
 “ this,” said Miss Milson.

“ And many are the instances which every
 “ day presents,” said Hammond. “ How
 “ many mothers to their children’s health
 “ sacrifice their own ! how many fathers for
 “ the support of the family whose prosperity
 “ is dearer to them than their own ease and
 “ comfort, toil incessantly. These are general;
 “ but of partial instances I could cite thou-
 “ sands ; several from my own knowledge ; to
 “ one of which I am indeed indebted for the
 “ blessing of returning to my country, and
 “ of quitting a state of the most abject
 “ slavery.”

Every one present requested a relation of the circumstance alluded to. To this Hammond willingly consented ; but as it was already late, it was proposed to defer the recital till the next morning, during which time he promised to endeavour to recollect any other occurrence of his life capable of amusing, if not of interesting them.

The remainder of the day was spent nearly as usual, and little difference remarked in it by any one except Agatha ; to whom every thing appeared to wear another face : the conversation in her idea assumed a new turn ; and even Sir John appeared supportable, when there were so *many* present whose merits counterbalanced his failings. But the pleasure she received from the welcome addition to her society, did not banish from her mind the remembrance of Jemima Simmonds, nor of her own intention to visit her, and administer all the relief in her power ; and she determined, if possible, to put her benevolent designs in practice the next morning.

When the morning arrived, Agatha, with a heart lighter than it had almost ever felt,
arose

arose early, and scarcely allowed herself time to dress, lest her design should be impeded by finding some of the family already up. After wandering about the house for some time, she at length met with a servant who was just come down stairs, and enquiring of her was directed the road to Jemima's habitation.

The cottage was at some distance from the rest of the village; and as both the house and its situation were remarkable, she easily found it from the directions given her. It was white, and built on the declivity of a hill, the greatest part of which had been converted into a hanging wood for the benefit of the prospect from one of the rooms at Milson Hall: the view was, however, at present intercepted by the coach-house.—Around the cottage was a little rustic garden, enclosed in a paling covered with currants, and, here and there, a rose tree trained in the same simple manner. Every thing bore the stamp of neatness and simplicity, and prejudiced in favour of the owner. Through a little white gate she entered the garden, and from thence
along

along a narrow sand walk, arriving at the door of the cottage, which on her knocking gently, was opened by a beautiful girl of a figure more interesting than she had ever beheld. She appeared to be little more than eighteen, was tall, and elegantly formed. Her face was pale, and bore the strongest marks of sorrow ; yet of a sorrow tempered with resignation, and which spoke the calm submission of a mild and gentle spirit, which had early learned to "bear" and forbear." The languor of ill health a smile of patient sufferance seemed to endeavour to conceal ; and with a faint blush, and an humble curtsy, she requested Agatha to be seated, and thanked her for the honour she did them. Agatha expressed her fears that she intruded on her, and entreated her to excuse the liberty she had taken in coming thus ; but that the description Lady Milson had given of her, had interested her extremely, and made her anxious to see one, from the example of whose filial piety she hoped to profit.

" Dear Madam," said Jemima, " you are very kind so to speak of me ; yet I have
" done

“done nothing to deserve such praises. I
“fear, indeed, I have not always behaved
“right; but it is my comfort that God will
“pardon our faults when they are not wil-
“ful.”

“Surely he will,” said Agatha; “and it is
“only when we act knowingly and inten-
“tionally wrong, that his mercy is withheld
“from us. But I am hurt to see you look
“so indifferent—I fear your health has suf-
“fered from uneasiness.”

“That would be nothing, Madam,” said
Jemima, “did it not give me the sad, sad
“prospect of leaving my aged parent without
“a child or friend. *That* breaks my heart,
“and makes me quite unhappy when I think
“I shall not recover.”

“You must not despair, indeed you must
not,” said Agatha; “but support your spi-
“rits, and your health will I hope return.
“Have you any physician?”

“Dear no, Madam,” said Jemima; “and
“could we afford it, he could do me little
“good. My illness has been brought on,
“I fear, by grief; and yet I have done all I
“could against it: indeed I have.”

“I fear

“ I fear to be impertinent,” said Agatha ;
“ yet perhaps by unbofoming your sorrows
“ they might find relief : And I would speak
“ to my parents for you, do every thing in
“ my power to ferve you.”

“ How kind you are,” said Jemima ;
“ yet, alas ! there is little in my ftory that
“ deferves to be fpoken of. It is true I am
“ unhappy, but who is not ?—And then I
“ could not bear, Madam, O I could not—”

At that moment fome one knocked at the
door, Jemima opened it, and Mrs. Herbert
entered. Mrs. Herbert accofted Jemima in
a tone of equal refpect and tendernefs. After
which turning to Agatha, fhe faid—“ I am
“ pleafed but not furprifed to find you here.
“ In your countenance when this good girl
“ was mentioned, I read every emotion that
“ paffed in your heart, and I knew that fooner
“ or later you would vifit one in whole fate I
“ faw you fo deeply interefted.”

“ How can I ever be grateful enough for
“ fuch goodnefs ;” faid Jemima, but, alas !
“ I do not deferve this condefcenfion !”

“ If you are not one of the beft of girls,”
faid

said Mrs. Herbert, "your face is very de-
" ceitful ; for never have I seen goodness of
" heart so strongly depicted on a counte-
" nance. I wish I durst ask you to tell us all
" your griefs ; but I fear it may renew them
" —and I will not ask it."

" Ah !" said Agatha, " it may indeed ;
" and I will not again ask it. I am hurt that
" I should have been so inconsiderate as to
" desire a communication which would re-
" vive and encrease instead of softening your
" troubles."

" O no, Madam—it is not for that ;—but
" only——"

" Only what, my dear," said Mrs. Her-
bert.

" Only I should be ashamed to tell you all
" my foolishness. O ! I durst not indeed,
" Madam."

" Be not ashamed, my good girl," said
Mrs. Herbert ; " there is nothing in virtu-
" ous affection which any one need blush to
" own."

" O Madam ! but ladies who are great and
" learned, and who, like you, have had an
" educa-

“ education, cannot know what it is to feel,
“ and—to love—” said she, hanging down
her head, “ like a poor girl.”

“ Education,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ does
“ not destroy our feelings ; it only teaches
“ us to subdue them when they are adverse to
“ reason and duty.”

“ Fear not,” said Agatha, “ to tell us
“ every thing. No one is faultless ; and
“ when those who are blest with educa-
“ tion sometimes deviate from the path of
“ rectitude, how much more ought we to ex-
“ cuse it in those who have had no tutors but
“ nature and their own hearts.”

“ And they are often the best,” said Mrs.
Herbert : “ At least, where they do not
“ instinctively lead us right, education, great
“ as is its influence, will find it an hard, and
“ often impracticable task to make us vir-
“ tuous.”—Then turning to Jemima she
said, “ you are an only child, I think ?”—

“ Yes, Madam ; and an orphan. My fa-
“ ther and mother both died while I was in
“ my cradle, and left me in the wide world
“ with no friend but my grandmother ; but
“ she

“ she was every thing to me—reared me from
“ infancy by her own hard labour, and work-
“ ed night and day as I grew older that she
“ might put me to school, and give me all
“ the little learning she could. O ! she is
“ the best of parents ; and I should deserve
“ the greatest punishment if I could have
“ forsaken her in her old age that never for-
“ took me while I was young and helpless.
“ A dreadful cold and fever took from her
“ the use of her limbs, it is now four years
“ ago, and has confined her to her bed ever
“ since. She has nobody to help her but
“ me :—And now, could I leave her Ma-
“ dam ? ”

“ Certainly not,” said Mrs. Herbert ; “ but
“ the young man who I was told was attach-
“ ed to you, you might still have married,
“ without quitting your aged parent ; and if
“ he was good, and deserving, he would only
“ have loved you the better for the time and
“ attention you bestowed on her.”

“ Ah Madam ! so I thought ; and though
“ I was sadly afraid that I could not do quite
“ so much for her, if I should marry and
“ have

“ have a family to look to, still, as his heart
“ was set upon it, and I could not bear to see
“ him unhappy, and as my dear grandmother
“ too talked to me and wanted me to have
“ him, I had consented. Poor, poor Harry;
“ Had you seen ladies the joy that shone
“ in his eyes when I at last consented to be-
“ come his wife ! how he blest me—how he
“ said that every labour would seem light and
“ pleasant when it was for me that he work-
“ ed !—”

“ Poor fellow !” said Agatha : “ and what
“ at last, what cruel accident parted you ?”

“ O Madam ! an accident that seemed at
“ the time to promise us the greatest happi-
“ ness. An old gentleman that had stood
“ Godfather to Harry, and had often been
“ kind to him, died, and left him in his will
“ an estate of almost sixty pounds a year in
“ land ; but it was in a distant country,
“ many, many miles from here, and he was to
“ go to live at it, and I could not leave my
“ grandmother : here began our troubles.”

“ But could she not have been taken thi-
“ ther by some easy conveyance ?” said Aga-
tha.

“ Alas !

“ Alas ! it was impossible, Madam. She
 “ has never, as I said, left her bed for four
 “ years, and the motion would have killed
 “ her. But old Mrs. Arnold, and all Har-
 “ ry’s friends, would have him to go to settle
 “ on his farm, and so he begged me to go
 “ with him. I could not, you see, go, and
 “ what could I do ?—And to ask him to go
 “ to leave his property to the care of others,
 “ was what I could not bear neither—and so,
 “ I told him I feared we must part ; but
 “ that I should always love him and pray
 “ for him, and would never love nor think
 “ of any body else. He did not make me
 “ any answer, but went away ; and the next
 “ morning—how shall I tell you ? O Ma-
 “ dam ! the next sad, sad morning he en-
 “ listed for a soldier, and I have never seen
 “ him since. His sisters are very angry with
 “ me, and their cruelty goes nigh to break
 “ my heart. They call me a bold, proud
 “ girl, and say I tried all I could to win their
 “ brother, and then refused to have him, to
 “ shew every body how he loved me, and
 “ what he would do when I slighted him ;
 “ and

“ and they say if he should be killed they
“ shall call me his murderer. O Madam !
“ can I bear this ? it cuts me to the heart !
“ And I want not their cruelty to encrease
“ my sorrow ; for if he should die I am sure
“ I shall never look up again. Poor, poor
“ Harry ! see ladies—but I am ashamed to
“ shew you all my foolishness—only you are
“ so good to me.—”

“ Fear to shew us nothing, my dear girl,”
said Mrs. Herbert : “ What was it you
“ meant ?”

“ Only this little bit of green sattin—poor
“ Harry gave it me—the house-keeper at his
“ Godfather’s gave it him as a plaything
“ when he was a child ; and he found it, and
“ gave it me with a lock of his hair once.
“ And see, I have worked, as well as I could,
“ the letters of his name upon it, and wear it
“ always next my heart ; and you know not
“ how it comforts me ! And I talk to it,
“ and cry over it, many and many an hour :
“ and those hours are the happiest I have
“ now.”

“ And your grandmother, is not she dis-
“ tressed for you ?” said Mrs. Herbert.

“ O ! I

“ O! I make it all appear well to her;
“ and when my work is done, I read to her,
“ and talk to her, and seem as happy as if
“ nothing had happened. And she never
“ suspects me, nor why poor Harry left me.”

“ Excellent girl!” said Mrs. Herbert,
“ how different a fate do you deserve!”

“ Dear, dear Jemima!” said Agatha, bursting into tears, “ my heart bleeds for you.
“ But where is he?”

“ Far, far away, I doubt,” said Jemima;
“ for I have seen nor heard nothing of him
“ since, and he has no doubt left this country—perhaps gone on shipboard, God
“ knows where! Perhaps—O Madam! what
“ shall I do!—But I forget myself, forget
“ how I have resolved to cheer up my spirits, and keep myself well if I can—not for
“ my own sake, for then I should not care,
“ and I should be happy to die when it
“ should please God to take me, but for the
“ sake of my dear parent.”

“ Then you have not the least idea,” said Agatha, “ whither he is gone!”

“ Not in the least Madam.”

“ Can

“ Can point out no clue by which he
“ could be traced if he has not yet left the
“ kingdom ?” said Mrs. Herbert.

“ None at all, Madam. If any body
“ knows it is his sisters, but they would not
“ tell me, though I have asked them many
“ times. And they call me bold, and say,
“ now he won’t have me I want to have him,
“ and follow him. But indeed, indeed I never
“ was bold. I loved him dearly, it is true ;
“ and when he loved me, it was natural, you
“ know, to love him again ; and I would have
“ done any thing to please him that had not
“ gone against my conscience or my duty.”

“ May we see your grandmother ?” said
Agatha, whose feeling heart could support
this scene no longer.

“ She is not yet awake,” said Jemima,
“ she never wakes so early ; and I am almost
“ afraid to disturb her.”

“ Do not, by any means,” said Agatha ;
“ and we will call again when we *can* see
“ her.”

Mrs. Herbert and Agatha, after the tend-
erest expressions of pity and anxiety, and an
assurance

assurance of every assistance in their power, took their leave; Agatha putting, as she went out, five guineas into Jemima's hand.

"Indeed, indeed, Madam!"—said Jemima, "pray excuse me. We are in no want, indeed we are not, and have wherewithal, thank God, to live."

"You will oblige me greatly," said Agatha, "if you will accept such a trifle from me.—Wine or medicine may be necessary for you."

Jemima burst into a flood of tears, and Agatha, weeping with her, and taking her hand, besought her, in the tenderest manner, to support her spirits, and promised to call again very soon.

C H A P. VI.

MRS. Herbert and Agatha had walked some distance from the cottage before either of them had power to speak. Agatha, at length, in a faltering voice, enquired of Mr. Herbert if it were not possible to disco-

ver poor Harry, and restore him to Jemima.

"I have been thinking of it," said Mrs. Herbert; "and, if he has not left the kingdom, it may be possible, though at some expence, by an application to the commanding officer, to buy him off."

"O! expence would be nothing," said Agatha; "my mother would gladly defray the charges whatever they were, I am convinced; and I would sell every thing I possess to do it. The jewels on my crucifix * alone are worth some hundred pounds; and a plain one would be as acceptable in the sight of Heaven, when for such a purpose the jewels had been taken from it."

"There is one, I know," said Mrs. Herbert, "to whom I could apply, and from whom we could receive immediate assistance: my uncle. But to him I fear to

* Agatha had been brought up by Lady Belmont in her own, the Roman Catholic religion, but without a tincture of bigotry; for she had always been taught, that every other faith, when sincere, and enjoining the practice of moral virtue, was equally acceptable to God.

"have

“ have recourse. It is singular, but the ro-
“ mantic tendency of his benevolence fre-
“ quently prevents my applying to him, in
“ such a case; convinced that, when his feel-
“ ings were once interested, he would ran-
“ sack the universe, nor leave a stone unturn-
“ ed till he had accomplished his designs,
“ though they robbed him of even the means
“ of subsistence.”

At length after some further consultation, they determined to apply to Mr. Hammond and Mr. Crawford, and if they thought it practicable, to send a messenger to overtake Harry, to purchase for him an exemption from the service, and assuring him of Jemima's attachment, to persuade him to return to her; when they hoped to enable them to maintain themselves with comfort without going to his farm, in which they proposed to place some of his relations, unless, on consideration, some better method could be adopted.

Pleased with this prospect of restoring peace where it was so justly merited, they returned impatiently; and Mrs. Herbert meet-

ing Mr. Crawford as she entered, requested him to join the Cassetta party that morning, as she told him they had a plan to communicate in which they wished for his advice and assistance.

In the breakfast room they found the family assembled, and waiting for them.

“Upon my honour and credit,” said Sir John as they entered, “but those ladies look prettier than ever. They have been painting themselves with the morning air, the best paint in nature—is not it Mr. Hammond? Don’t they look nicely?”

“You must either imagine us immoderately vain,” said Mrs. Herbert, “that the praises of one person are not enough to satisfy us, or else believe your own veracity doubtful, that you call another witness to support your assertions.”

“Why this is no how,” said Sir John. “Whenever one talks to you, Mrs. Herbert, you answer one in such a round-about manner, that a plain sensible man, though he may be a gentleman and a baronet into the bargain, perhaps, can’t understand what you mean.”

“I am

“ I am sorry, indeed,” said Mrs. Herbert ;
 “ and for the future I will endeavour to adapt
 “ my language to the comprehension of gen-
 “ tlemen and baronets.”

“ That’s right,” said Sir John, “ and it
 “ will but serve your own turn better too ;
 “ for no woman can get many sweet-hearts
 “ that shews herself fit for a school-mistress
 “ to half the men she meets. Men hate a
 “ woman that understands geography and
 “ grammar, and things of that sort.”

“ Very true, Sir John,” said Lady Mil-
 son ; “ who would like a wife that was a
 Mackareltician ?”

“ Mathewmatician you mean, my Lady,”
 said Sir John.

At this moment two persons on horseback
 passing by the window on full gallop, attract-
 ed the attention of every one ; and Mr. Or-
 mistace, his eyes sparkling with transport,
 rather flew than ran out of the room. He
 returned in a few minutes, and going to the
 window, beckoned Mrs. Herbert to him.
 When she approached, he said, in a low voice,
 “ Emma, are you disposed for a feast this
 “ morning ?”

"Of the eyes or the mind," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Of both," said he; "for I can bestow upon you the highest luxury."

"The species of luxury to which you allude you well know I always share with delight," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Well then, you recollect the mention of Jemima Simmonds, her situation and distress?"

"Surely I do."

"Harry Arnold is returned!"

"Is returned?" said Mrs. Herbert; "I am delighted. Miss Belmont come hither this moment, I entreat you."

Mrs. Herbert then communicated to Agatha the welcome tidings of Harry's return, who heard it with tears of delight. Some of the party observing the pleasure evident in the countenances of Agatha, Mrs. Herbert, and Mr. Ormistace, requested to know the cause of their joy, that they might share it; and a servant coming in at that moment, and saying eagerly that Harry Arnold was returned, the rejoicing became general. Mrs.

Milford

Milson enquired if it was not to the benevolent exertions of Mr. Ormistace that they were all indebted for the pleasure of this event.

“ My exertions have been trifling,” said Mr. Ormistace. “ Immediately after Lady Milson’s affecting detail of poor Jemima’s situation, I ordered one of my servants to make the necessary enquiries, and, if it was within the limits of possibility, to discover Arnold, and bring him back. My servant is active and intelligent : he has pursued and found him, and obtained his discharge, and has this moment brought him back in transport to his faithful Jemima.”

“ Kind, good, noble Mr. Ormistace !” said Agatha, who could neither conceal nor silence her transports.

“ Have a care of your heart, my dear,” said Mrs. Herbert ; “ for a few more such actions as this would infallibly run away with it.”

“ If any thing could add to my pleasure at this moment,” said Mr. Ormistace, “ it would be the approbation of an heart like Miss Belmont’s.”

“ We are all sharers in the joy,” said Mr. Crawford, “ and shall be yet more so, if Mr. Ormistace will permit us to make the cause general by sharing the expence attending it. His are the exertions, and is therefore the greatest pleasure ; but this, by permitting us to become, in some measure, principals in the affair, will give us consequence and complete our satisfaction.”

“ By no means,” said Mr. Ormistace : “ the expence is trifling, very trifling—nothing compared to the pleasure received ! a luxury very cheaply purchased ! Of one piece of cruelty I have been guilty for my own gratification. I have forbid Arnold’s return to Jemima till I am present to witness their meeting.”

Almost every one present joining in an earnest request to be permitted to be spectators of the moving scene, Mr. Ormistace consented, assuring that he had not as yet even seen Jemima, being determined not to see her, till he could behold her happy.

“ Excellent Mr. Ormistace !” said Agatha low to Mrs. Herbert, “ bestower of such felicity—how do I envy his feelings !”

“ If

"If that moving index of yours tells true," said Mrs. Herbert, "(and I am sure it never spoke falsely yet) his felicity, if it equal, cannot exceed your own."

Mrs. Herbert then proposed that they should no longer delay the happiness in their reach, nor detain the impatient Harry from the mistress of his heart. Mr. Ormistace, therefore, left the room for a few minutes to prepare Arnold for the interview, and to request him to permit a few friends who anxiously wished it, to be partakers of his happiness by witnessing it. Arnold, whose heart filled with gratitude, joy, and love, scarcely allowed him the use of his reason, required no entreaties to induce him to consent without hesitation to whatever his benefactor proposed; and the whole party, immediately on Mr. Ormistace's return to them, joined the happy lover, and proceeded with him to Jeremima's cottage.

Harry Arnold was tall, and of a figure, for a person in his station, uncommonly elegant. On his rough, manly features a look of openness and integrity bespoke his genuine
G 5 worth;

worth ; while the warmth and ardour of youthful impetuosity were checked by a smile of placid tenderness as the sweet image of his Jemima presented itself to his enraptured thoughts.

Mrs. Herbert proposed that herself and Agatha should go a few minutes before the rest to prepare Jemima for the interview, which in her present weak state of health and spirits, she feared might otherwise be more than she could sustain. This request was instantly approved of by every one ; and the rest remained at a small distance from the house while Mrs. Herbert and Agatha advanced.

Jemima, whose depression and langour had been rather encreased than lessened by the dangerous indulgence of dwelling on her sorrows to them, had scarcely power to speak or stand as she opened the door to them. " This is
" kind indeed," was all she could say, as they entered.

" Nothing new, I hope, has arrived to
" distress you, my dear Jemima ?" said Mrs. Herbert, observing her dejection.

Jemima

Jemima put her finger to her lips, and looked towards the bed where her grandmother lay, in token of silence; then going nearer to the door, and speaking low, she assured her she had no new cause for uneasiness. "But alas!" continued Jemima, "I cannot controul my grief! there is a sinking at my heart, Madam."

"Which shall be removed," said Agatha, "and you shall be as happy——"

Mrs. Herbert pressed Agatha's hand, in order to caution her to break it to Jemima more gently; then turning to Jemima, she said, "We know not what happiness Heaven may have in store for us when we act so as to deserve its favours. In the moments of our greatest distress, the clouds of sorrow break on a sudden, and the sun of happiness shines upon us, and gilds all our future prospects.—"

"Ah madam!" said Jemima; "but it is the fate of some to be born beneath a winter sky, when the clouds never break."

"That will not be yours, I am well assured," said Agatha. "I can foresee such hap-

“presents in store for you!—What would my
“dear, my sweet Jemima think, if——”
Then recollecting herself Agatha looked at
Mrs. Herbert; who remarking that Jemima’s
colour changed from the observance of Agatha’s
manner, “Arm yourself, my good girl,”
she said, “that as you have with fortitude
“borne the weight of severe affliction, you
“may not be overcome by too exquisite an
“happiness. Promise me to be calm and
“composed, and we will keep you no longer
“in suspense concerning the blessings you
“are on the point of sharing.”

“I see, I see, I know it all,” said Jemima,
“he is come, he is here! I know he is——”

“He is, indeed,” said Mrs. Herbert.

“He is, he is!” said Agatha.

“Let me run to meet him!”—Then stopping
herself, she fell on her knees, and raising
her clasped hands to Heaven. “Thank
“Heaven, thank Heaven!” she exclaimed;
“and O! forgive me, good God! that I have
“grieved, sinner that I am, at thy will, thy
“just will.” She then attempted to rise,
but her feeble efforts were insufficient without

Mrs.

Mrs. Herbert's and Agatha's assistance. The moment she had risen, forgetful of them, of every thing but her love, she sprang from them, and flew like lightning she knew not whither.

Harry, who with difficulty had been restrained from approaching the house sooner, sprang to meet her, and in a moment they were in each other's arms.

"Jemima! my love! my darling! forgive me," said Harry. "And do I meet thee again?"

"Oh! forgive *me!*" said Jemima!" 'twas "I that drove you——But O! my Harry! "nothing but——"

"No reflections on what is past, dearest, dearest girl!" said Harry. "We are happy now, and shall never part! I will never leave you, nor your dear good grandmother. Every thing has been done for us by the best of gentlemen."

This reflection reminding Harry of the many who were present, which in the first moments of meeting Jemima he had totally forgotten, he loosed her from his arms; and

Jemima,

Jemima, who, in the first transports of beholding him again, had not even seen that any other was near them, now looked around, and coloured extremely, on observing so many witnesses of her tenderness; when Harry, with a grace which the noblest feelings of nature inspired, led Jemima to Mr. Ormistace.

“Here, Jemima! here, my love!” he said, “is our generous benefactor—here is the noble gentleman to whom we owe all our happiness. Join with me in blessing him.”

They then both in one moment dropped on their knees at his feet; and Mr. Ormistace raising them, his heart big, and his eyes filled with tears, said, in a faltering voice, “I have done nothing—or if I had, your happiness—this sweet moment, would repay me an hundredfold!”

Mr. Craggs, who had accompanied the rest of the party, and who had paid, apparently, much attention to the scene before him, now advanced towards Jemima, and with a look which implied an interest in her welfare and a desire of serving her, “I have observed,” he said, “that you have shed many tears.”

“For-

“Forgive me, Sir,” said Jemima; “but I did not see how many gentlemen were by, and it was a relief to me.”

“A temporary one, it might be,” said Mr. Craggs: “but be assured from me, that tears, though they may sometimes give a momentary relief, are, in the end, injurious to the constitution, destroy its energy, and impair its vigour.”

Jemima listened in silent astonishment, and Mr. Craggs proceeded: “Tears, young woman, though you may not perhaps have studied their composition, consist, as I can inform you, of aqueous and saline particles. Now the best way to prevent them is to abstain from every thing which may occasion a redundancy of either of these in our constitution. I had myself an unfortunate, and, as I am now clear, a dangerous habit of shedding tears at times; but by denying myself every thing which has much of either salt or water in its composition, I have lost the propensity entirely.”

“Then I pity you from my soul,” said Mr. Ormiflace; “for the tears this sweet girl

“ girl shed at that moment were the most voluptuous of gratifications : sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.”

Mr. Craggs returned a contemptuous stare to this remark, and then withdrew from the company, who, except Mr. and Mrs. Craggs, entered immediately Betty Simmonds's cottage.

The old woman, who could distinguish nothing but confused expressions of joy from voices new and strange to her, was at a loss to account for what was passing, and waited Jemima's return with anxious impatience.— Jemima requested every one to wait without, while she herself broke to her grandmother the welcome news of Harry's return, who, however, knew not the cause of his absence though she had often lamented it. Jemima then told her in a few words the whole that had passed, concealing nothing but her rejection of Harry, and imputing his enlisting as a soldier to some cause of offence she had unknowingly given him. The venerable old woman sat up in her bed, and with a feeble voice blest them both an hundred times, and
prayed

prayed that if ever Jemima should be a mother she might have a child like herself.

The party now prepared to leave the cottage, Mr. Ormistace having first desired that the nuptials might be solemnised the next day, and Sir John promising to give them a wedding dinner.

Agatha, her eyes swimming in tears, and her steps tottering from the emotions by which she had been agitated, thankfully accepted the arm which Hammond, who had gazed upon her in silent delight for some minutes, offered, to support her home.

"Mr. Hammond, I am certain," said Agatha, "has not been an unmoved spectator of the scene which has just passed!"

"Far, far from it," said Hammond;
"and could I even have remained untouched
"by objects so interesting as those which
"have called us hither, the dear, the sweet
"emotions of that best and kindest of hearts
"would have awakened every feeling of
"mine."

"I would give any thing," said Agatha,
"that you had seen as I did poor Jemima's
"previous sorrow, to be enabled the more
"perfectly

“ perfectly to enjoy the delightful reverse of
“ happiness now displayed. Yet that you
“ have witnessed *this* scene is a pleasure to
“ me ; and how do I pity those, if such there
“ are, who know not what it is to have a
“ friend : since even the pure joys of benevo-
“ lence are heightened by the possession of a
“ friend to share them.”

“ Blest ! most blest am I !” said Ham-
mond, “ to be, this once at least, the happy
“ partner of your joys ! would, O ! would
“ that mine were indeed the delightful lot to
“ share them ever ! and not only to share,
“ but to encrease them !”

“ You always will,” said Agatha, “ I am
“ convinced. The place your beloved sister
“ possessed in my heart is wholly yours.”

“ O ! that that heart were all *all*—Yet
“ what would I say ? Thus esteemed, deem-
“ ed worthy of such friendship, it were un-
“ grateful to repine ; yet happy, happy he to
“ whom that heart”——

“ What do you mean ?” said Agatha. “ What
“ would you say ? Your manner and myste-
“ rious words alarm me. Do you doubt my
“ sincerity ?”

“ I doubt

"I doubt nothing but myself," said Hammond; "nothing but my own resolution, which is too weak to bear such repeated trials."

"What trials?" said Agatha. "I do not comprehend you. Is there any thing I can say to make you more at ease?"

"Nothing, nothing! only hate me, despise me, do any thing but call me thus your friend."

"But call you my friend!" said Agatha; "surely I thought, I hoped the title was dear to you?"

"Dear!" interrupted he, "yes! dearer than life itself!"

"Then why am I forbid it? Unkind Mr. Hammond! I had hoped that the place your sister possessed in my regard, should have been supplied by her brother, who for her sake, nay, for his own, was dear to me! but since you thus reject my proffered friendship, I call it back; I will not force on any one"——

"Miserable that I am," exclaimed Hammond. "What have I said? what have I done?—Dear, sweet Miss Belmont, forgive me my

“ my impetuosity—forgive the frantic starts
“ of a man whose mind is at war with itself,
“ whom nothing but the fear of distressing
“ you could restrain from declaring every
“ sentiment of his soul. But say you forgive
“ me, and will call me again your friend, and
“ I will strive to be more master of myself,
“ if possible: only forgive me.”

“ I do, I do,” said Agatha; “ say no
“ more, Mr. Hammond—my friend!”

“ My friend!” repeated Hammond! “ my
“ all! my——Then you have quite forgiven
“ me what has passed?”

“ I said I had.”

“ Give me then your hand—this once give
“ it me!”

“ Here,—and with it receive the assurance
“ of the sincerest regard.”

Hammond had not courage to speak again; and pressing her hand to his lips, walked on in a silence which Agatha endeavoured, but often ineffectually, to interrupt. He gave short and vague answers to every thing she said. At last, she lamented the necessity they should be under of postponing the recital he had promised them till the next morning.

ing, since it was already time to dress for dinner. Hammond replied, that he was thankful it was too late: his mind being agitated, and his thoughts confused, he felt himself incapable of reciting any thing clearly; but that he would study for composure, and by the next morning he trusted should obtain it.

"Heaven grant it!" said Agatha; "for to see you thus distresses me greatly."

Agatha, her spirits agitated by her interest in Jemima's fate, and afterwards by Hammond's, to her, unaccountable wildness, had not power to overtake the rest of the party, who had walked some paces first; and she did not arrive with Hammond till they were entered, and gone to dress. She, therefore, left him immediately on her return, and retired to her chamber; her mind sensible of an oppression, for which she could not account, unless from the anxiety she was conscious she felt at seeing Hammond thus strange, and unhappy she knew not why. He had said, that nothing but the fear of distressing her prevented his declaring every thing that passed in his soul: surely then, she thought, he is in possession of

of some fatal secret relative to me, and fears to reveal it. My mother, my father perhaps ill! Yet, on recollection, she thought that impossible; since Lady Belmont's letter, so lately received, had nothing in it mysterious or alarming. What then could it be? To know the worst, she fancied, would be a relief; yet she durst not ask him—durst not revert to a scene from which he had apparently suffered so greatly; and she determined, however painful her suspense, to say nothing which might renew in him feelings that had equally distressed and alarmed her.

C H A P. VII.

IN the evening, Miss Milson, who confessed herself “enamoured of the harmony of sweet sounds,” desired that they might have a little musical treat. In this wish she was joined by several others, and the rest of the day was chiefly devoted to music. Agatha, who had early attained to perfection in the charming art, made one of the principal perform-

performers, and her voice and manner were equally applauded. After she had sung several pathetic airs with feeling and taste, Mr. William Milson brought the following song which he gave to Agatha, saying, he had lately met with it, that it pleased him greatly, and he therefore would entreat her to sing and play it, certain that her performance would do it more than justice.

Dans votre lit, my charming maid!
 May not a care thy soul invade;
 But soft and sweet thy slumbers be,
 While hov'ring Angels watch o'er thee!

Dans votre lit,

My fancy, in thy dreams, pourtray
 The actions of thy spotless day;
 Each deed of sacred charity,
 In blest review retrac'd to thee!

Dans votre lit,

Should sickness come (which Heaven forfend!)
 Still may that bosom own a friend,
 Whose tender cares the balm shall be,
 To bring returning health to thee!

Dans votre lit,

O! if

O! if a wife ordain'd to prove,
 May some dear pledges bless thy love,
 Whose smiles with transport thou shalt see,
 Their infant arms encircling thee!

Dans votre lit.

And when thy gentle spirit flies,
 To join at last its kindred skies,
 Then may Religion—Piety!
 Smooth every path 'twixt Heaven and thee!

Dans votre lit.

“ If I did not believe the author of that
 “ song actually present,” said Mr. Crawford,
 “ I should lament his absence, since he never
 “ could hear it with so much pleasure, or to
 “ so much advantage as thus sung.”

Mr. William Milson coloured, and went
 out of the room without speaking.

“ It is unpleasant to detect those we would
 “ love in crimes,” said Mrs. Herbert, low to
 Agatha; “ but I fear all my heart can plead
 “ in your behalf will not exculpate *you*.”

“ What have I done?” said Agatha, some-
 what alarmed by the seriousness of her man-
 ner.

“ Stolen

“ Stolen an heart that has been long devoted to your friend,” said Mrs. Herbert ;
“ and I much mistake if my *faithful* Strephon has not found another Delia at whose feet to lay his bays.”

“ Not me, surely ?” said Agatha.

“ Yes, you ! very surely,” said Mr. Herbert. “ I only hope that his second flame may prove more propitious than his first. But if he were to be slighted by her too, I might as well have the honour of employing his muse as another.”

“ If what you say were true,” said Agatha, “ he would be peculiarly unfortunate, since he would, if I have the least knowledge of my own heart, find the same ungenerous requital a second time.”

“ I wish,” said Mrs. Herbert, repeating Agatha’s former words, “ that Miss Belmont pitied him as much as I do, he would then be less unhappy at least.” Then, turning to Hammond, she said : “ Every one has thanked Miss Belmont for her charming performance but you Mr. Hammond.”

“ But me !” said Hammond, startled at

the unexpected remark, "I am sure I think
" —I am sure I felt—I am sure I never
" heard"—

"Nor did I ever hear," said Mrs. Herbert, "thanks expressed in so clear and
" graceful a manner."

"If I did not thank Miss Belmont before,"
said Hammond, recollecting himself, "it was
" not that I was not delighted with her per-
" formance; for that were impossible: but
" there were so many others who claimed to
" be heard, that I did not intrude my voice."

"There are some certain occasions," said
Mrs. Herbert in a lower tone, and which,
from others speaking at the same time, was
only audible to the person to whom it was
addressed, "there are some occasions where
" permitting the claims of others to be heard
" in preference to your own, may not en-
" sure you success. - You perhaps understand
" me?"

"Indeed, I do not," said Hammond.

"Then time, and a little further acquaint-
" ance with Miss Belmont, will elucidate
" my meaning," said Mrs. Herbert.

Hammond,

Hammond, who perceived that Mrs. Herbert suspected him of an attachment to Agatha, and who wished at all events to drop the subject, requested any one of the ladies to sing another song, and offered to accompany the singer, whomever it might be, on the flute.

"Accept the proposal, some lady, by all means," said Mrs. Herbert; "I am convinced that at this moment Mr. Hammond will play delightfully."

"And so he will," said Sir John. "Mrs. Herbert is always joking some body in her manner without any respect to their present or future rank; and upon my honour and credit it's not fair."

"But you know as I seldom speak intelligibly, Sir John," said Mrs. Herbert, "my jests are of little importance: and it is not a minute since Mr. Hammond himself owned that he did not understand me."

Hammond, determined to silence Mrs. Herbert, without waiting for any one else, took up the flute, and began to play; and Miss Milson went immediately to the pianofort and accompanied him.—The short re-

mainder of the evening was spent in general conversation.

When Agatha went to rest, she felt herself little disposed to sleep. Hammond's extraordinary manner was a perpetual source of surprize and uneasiness; while the coolness she imagined she remarked in his behaviour to her at times, distressed her greatly; and she wearied herself in conjectures concerning its cause. Morning arrived before she had closed her eyes; and the morning brought with it the same anxiety—an anxiety different from all she had before experienced. At length, she dropped asleep; but waking soon, after uneasy dreams, she determined to arise, and seek, in the refreshment of a morning walk, a revival of her spirits, and an oblivion of the doubts and reflections which had disturbed her repose.

With this view, she went to the Cassetta, and when there, took down a book, determined to read. But scarcely had she read a page when Hammond entered. She started, coloured, and offered, she knew not why, to go.

“Surely I have not offended Miss Belmont.”

"mont," said Hammond, "that she prepares
"thus to leave me?"

"Not in the least," said Agatha; "indeed
"you have not—but"—

"But what?" my dear Miss Belmont.

"I thought you might have come here
"expecting to find no one, and might wish
"to read or write."

"That I came hither expecting to find no
"one, is, indeed true; but what reading, or
"what writing should I not exchange with
"pleasure for your society!"

Agatha, who observed with delight the tranquility of his manner, so opposite to what it had been the whole of the day preceding, sat down again with pleasure; and presenting to him the book she was reading, asked his opinion of the author's merit. He gave his sentiments; but after a few minutes conversation, relapsed into an absence, from which she in vain endeavoured to divert him. He put a letter he held in his hand into his pocket, and walked to the window, where he remained in silence for some time.

Agatha at length said, "I fear, nay, I am
"sure I interrupt you; and though your po-

"liteness detained me, you have studies which
"require solitude. I will go to the house,
"and when you have done writing, you shall
"come to me."

"Indeed, indeed, I have no letter to write,"
said Hammond: "I was, it is true, reading
"one—one which affected me; but which
"it would be now too late to answer."

"The loss of some friend, I fear you la-
"ment," said Agatha.

"Yes," replied Hammond, "a friend
"whose loss is irreparable; who would have
"advised me, consoled me, supported my
"feeble efforts."

"I did indeed fear," said Agatha, "that
"some new distress had arisen. And is the
"fatal loss recent?"

"Recent!—Dear Miss Belmont, what
"friend can I ever lament, whom ever have
"reason to lament as the one so dear, so just-
"ly dear to us both? She still is, must be
"ever the object of my eternal regret; and
"the more, as every day I am but the more
"sensible of her loss."

"Alas!" said Agatha, "what can I say to
"com-

"comfort you! But tell me all you feel, impart all your sufferings to me, and if my friendship cannot cure, it may alleviate them. That letter was from her then?"

"Yes, several years since, while I was a student at college, it was written to me: it contains the best and most valuable of counsel, and nothing should have torn it from me. In bondage and captivity it has been my companion and friend; in sickness and sorrow my best comforter."

"I know not if I ought to ask to read it," said Agatha.

"You are all kindness," said Hammond; "Yet I fear to communicate it—I fear to distress the tenderest and best of hearts."

"Fear nothing," said Agatha, "if it will be any relief to you. We will read it together; and perhaps, though it may affect you deeply at the time, the indulgence of your grief may, in the end, soften it, and restore your peace."

Hammond attempted to speak his thanks; but his voice faltered, and he stopped. After a moment's pause, he took out the letter, and

gave it to Agatha; who, drawing her chair nearer to his, and placing the letter on a table which stood before them, read it with him.

Blagrove, March the 26th.

“SEPARATED from my beloved Edward, I have no resource but in writing to him; and the pleasure that affords is trifling compared to the delight of exchanging our ideas in conversation. Yet some advantages result from letters which are denied to conversation: we have leisure to think ere we speak, to arrange our thoughts with more clearness and precision, and uninterrupted by the occasional remarks of others, can pursue our subject without any link being broken in the chain of our ideas. We can, besides, say on paper what we fear to speak, can offer advice, when we have leisure to adjust the language in which it is conveyed, with less danger of offence, and can write what, from feeling too sensibly, we are unable to speak. These ideas have induced me to venture to address the brother
whom

whom the heaviest of losses has placed under my care, with offers of advice for the regulation of that conduct, on which depends his honour, respectability, and welfare in this, and his eternal happiness in a future state.

“ With feelings alive to sensibility, with an heart glowing with generosity and honour, with passions strong, though, I trust, controulable, and a temper warm and ardent though not irascible, you are preparing to enter life; to mix with a world, where vice under a thousand alluring forms will attract, and virtue, in spite of all her internal graces, in as many forbidding ones repel your pursuit. Thus circumstanced, it is not enough to say, “ hold to the one, and despise the other,” but shun, as you would vice itself, every approach towards it, however remote; whether in company, conversation, or books.

“ Women have many advantages denied to men: their life domestic and retired, and even when otherwise, their dissipation rarely leading to any criminal pursuit, they have not the temptations, which men initiated almost from their infancy in the schools of vice, are

condemned to encounter. Yet, on the other hand, men are supposed to be framed with minds as well as bodies superior to ours in strength, and therefore more capable of resisting temptation when placed within its reach.

“ From pernicious precepts, from the contagion of ill example, and from the yet more dangerous shafts of ridicule launched perpetually by the weak and vicious against those who dare, in opposition to them, to be wise and virtuous, I tremble lest you should be led to relinquish the duties you now hold most sacred, the principles your native virtues would otherwise forbid you to violate. As the safest and surest armour against such attacks, form to yourself one regular plan of conduct, conformable to your own ideas of propriety and rectitude; and to this invariably adhere on every occasion as well trivial as important.

“ The inheritance you derive from our parents, my beloved Edward, is, I am happy to find, considerable enough to afford you an ample provision without the necessity of recurring either to a trade or profession to encrease

crease it ; and, as your constitution is delicate, it is, as you know, my earnest wish that you should have no one decided pursuit. Yet, while I propose this, imagine not that I wish your life to pass in supineness and sloth : far from it. No ! let there never be a moment undevoted to some pleasing and even useful employment : and these, while you lay the foundation of sciences in your youth, can never be wanting.

“ If you study more earnestly than those with whom you associate, it is more than probable that you may be dignified with the fashionable appellation of a Quiz. Perhaps, likewise, if you refuse to reduce your understanding to the level of a brute by wine, or resist their exhortations to join in any other favourite vice, you may on such occasions likewise, be called a Quiz. But condemn their ridicule ; and be assured, that every title given to us by the votaries of vice and folly because we persist in shunning their paths, is a title in which we may glory ! and adds a dignity to our character more splendid than a coronet could confer.

“By a thousand acts of kindness to all with whom you have hitherto associated, you have shewn yourself capable of friendship, and have evinced an heart open to its sacred influence. It is the most valuable tendency of human nature, and I wish to cherish it. But be careful on whom you fix. “Be kind to many, but have but one counsellor of a thousand :” for it is but too just, that by the insidious arts of some of their own sex, rather than the other, are men as well as women generally betrayed into vice. When you have indeed found a friend, and are convinced of his worth, prize the inestimable treasure as your life ! Yet this I need not urge : the honour, the sincerity of your disposition render such a charge unnecessary.

“There is another, more tender, and, because ratified by the most solemn of vows, yet more sacred connection, which you may one day form ; and which, from the natural susceptibility of your heart, it is improbable you should not. In this, as in friendship, seek to be master of yourself ; seek to remain unguided by the impulse of the moment ; nor let caprice

caprice dictate an attachment on which your future happiness depends. There are many whom from the elegance of their persons or manners you may be led to admire, and, in consequence of that admiration to treat with greater attention than others. But of this be cautious: nor by a marked assiduity give any woman reason to suppose you feel that preference which a further acquaintance with her disposition or foibles may destroy. It is possible that you may thus lose the opportunity of impressing an heart capable of rendering you happy, in your favour, which another less generous admirer may, in the mean time, make his own. Yet, to an ingenuous mind, the pain of a disappointment, where the affection has not been suffered to take too deep root, is infinitely preferable to the humiliating consciousness of a deviation from prudence or propriety: and it is noble to hazard our own happiness rather than to trifle with or endanger that of another.

“ May Heaven preserve you, my Edward, from every sorrow incident to human nature! Bless every pursuit of your life, every attachment

tachment of your heart, and shield you from the heart-rending anguish your sister has been destined to experience! an anguish which nothing but the consciousness of its being unmerited, and not the consequence of an imprudent partiality indulged in contradiction to duty or propriety could have enabled me to sustain: especially, at that early period of my life, before reason had obtained its due sway, and enabled me to command my feelings.

“ A person whose name I have long since forbidden myself to write or speak, had known and loved me almost from infancy, my heart was sensible of his worth and returned his affection; our parents who had been friends long and justly dear to each other, saw and encouraged our attachment. No wonder then, that in an heart like mine, love authorized by duty should make a deep impression. I yielded to its delightful influence, gave the reins to my fond hopes and ardent imagination, and blest in his undoubted affection, and in the sacred sanction of parental approbation, looked forward with a delight impossible to
be

be described, to the moment that should for ever unite me to one in whom every hope, every wish, every joy, was centred. Too fatal indulgence! too sweet illusion! hope, false, flattering hope, raises meteors of bliss which dance before our deluded sight—we behold, we grasp at, and lose them for ever! The fairer are our prospects of felicity, the more are they fleeting—in the bloom of youth, with an heart formed to bless her on whom it was bestowed, with every excellent disposition to endear him to society, was snatched from the transitory happiness he had promised himself in this life, to a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” in another. But who shall paint your poor Maria’s sufferings, my Edward! Religion alone has been my consolation and support: for we are not eternally divided—we shall meet again never to part! In those regions of endless bliss, how pure the delight to behold all who are dear to us, to see them partakers of the same eternal, and, till then, inconceivable felicity! This image robs death of every sting, and enables me to view the moment of my departure from this fragile existence, with hope, exultation, and joy.

One

One only tie attaches me to life. Heaven is my witness how dear you are to me! and to see you blest as this world can render you would be the consummation of my earthly wishes; to behold you as friend, as husband, and as father, beloved, respected, and happy. Such, I trust, I pray may be your lot, my Edward! yet who dares say that I shall live to see it! Your constitution weak and delicate, your life seems to hang but by a thread, mine strong and unailing, promises a length of years. Yet how deceitful are such promises! How often do we behold those whose ruddy health seemed an earnest of many days to come, and threatened to bid defiance to disease or death, followed to the grave by their sickly yet surviving friends! Yes: ten thousand accidents, impossible to be foreseen or prevented, may snatch me from this world before you. Yet still if it be permitted by Heaven, and I love to cherish the hope that it will, still may I see and watch over you—still may my departed spirit hover around him, whose memory only could call it back to earth. Already does my imagination transport

port me to the regions of the blessed. Already do I look down upon you, as you run, with persevering piety, "the race that is set before you." Methinks I see you at this moment—she, whose virtues have fixed and united every tender affection of your soul, the sharer and heightener of your joys, the soother and mitigator of your sorrows, the friend as well as mistress of your heart, seated beside you. I see you gaze upon her with unutterable tenderness—I hear you repeat with transport the vows which have inseparably united you—I hear you say, you are *happy*;—and, did but your poor Maria live to witness it, should have no wish ungratified. I see a smiling infant approach his parents—I hear him lisp my name—I hear him say, that had I lived I should have loved him!—I see you catch him to your heart with tears of agonizing tenderness!—Edward! the picture is too affecting—I cannot go on——"

Agatha burst into tears; and, with a motion as innocent as it was involuntary, dropped her head upon Hammond's shoulder. In all the little troubles of her childhood, and
when

when older, in every emotion excited by the perusal of fictitious distress, she had been accustomed thus to seek refuge in the bosom of his sister: that sister now present to her imagination—her image actually before her eyes—in her idea every other was lost for a moment; while her heart, softened beyond what she could support by the affecting picture just drawn, sought its comforter in Hammond. He pressed her to his heart, unable to speak, and kissed with impassioned tenderness her cheek as it reposed on him.

Agatha started, and rose: a recollection of an impropriety, a consciousness that something more than friendship, both in her own and Hammond's heart, occasioned the emotions she felt, struck her mind instantaneously; and terrified, confused, and distressed, she attempted to open the door. Hammond detained her; and catching hold of her hand, and pressing it between both his, "Whither, whither would you go? my all! my dearest Miss Belmont," he exclaimed, "Why quit me at this moment?—the sweetest of
" my

" my life!—Hear me first confess every feeling of this heart—this heart that—"

" Detain me not, Mr. Hammond," interrupted Agatha; "for I must, I *will* go."

" Say first then you forgive my presumption."

" Let me go now, I entreat, I conjure you!——"

" O! I have offended you! and can I part from you till you have forgiven me? You are angry with me."

" I am; but I am still more so with myself. I never felt so miserable as at this moment; and I have forfeited your esteem as well as my own."

" Forfeited my esteem! Good God! Never, never, Miss Belmont, dearest, best-beloved of my heart! never did I esteem you as at this moment—never were you so truly estimable! Suffer me only to tell you all that has passed in my soul——"

" Mr. Hammond—another time—perhaps—but for the present suffer me to leave you, nor take it ill that I do, for my spirits are unequal to the task of supporting a further conversation at present."

" For

“ For worlds would I not distress you, nor
“ urge what would give a moment’s pain to
“ one whose happiness is infinitely dearer to
“ me than my own. It would only be a sa-
“ tisfaction—nay, the greatest of blessings,
“ would you but deign to say you forgive my
“ presumption, pardon the ungenerous ad-
“ vantage I dared to take of the sweet though
“ involuntary instance of the tenderest friend-
“ ship.”

“ Say no more,” said Agatha; “ nor recal
“ to my mind what I would wish to forget
“ for ever. We will return to the house now;
“ and, if possible, recover our spirits from
“ the depression that has hung upon them.”

Hammond tremblingly offered her his arm,
and Agatha, though she had never hesitated
to accept it before, was preparing to refuse
it; but after a moment’s pause, feeling her-
self unable to walk without support, she took
it without speaking.

They had walked but a few steps from the
Cassetta, when they were met by Mrs. Her-
bert and Miss Cassandra. Agatha coloured
at meeting them, and Mrs. Herbert observ-
ing

ing it, said, "You are an excellent riser, Miss Belmont; and the glow on your cheeks proves the benefit of the custom, and will ensure you a compliment from Sir John."

Agatha said she had found herself unable to sleep, which had occasioned her rising earlier than usual.

"There were some others probably in the same predicament," said Mrs. Herbert. "How did *you* sleep, Mr. Hammond?"

"O! Mr. Hammond was up before Miss Belmont," said Miss Cassandra; "for I heard his room door open two hours ago."

"You came from the Cassetta, if I mistake not?" said Mrs. Herbert: "'tis a delightful room, and admirably calculated for the society of a *friend*: and I have no doubt that *this* morning every flower scattered unusual fragrance."

"It's always a pleasant place," said Miss Cassandra; "and I tell my sister that whenever I get an admirer she shall lend it me to be courted in. Don't you think it would do nicely for such a purpose, Mrs. Herbert?"

"I should

"I should *think* it would," said Mrs. Herbert; "but Miss Belmont's the best judge
 "—you had better apply to her."

"What do you think, Miss Belmont?"
 said Miss Cassandra: "Would it not be a
 "charming courting-room?"

Agatha coloured extremely, and replied, hardly conscious of what she said, "It would
 "indeed;—I should think—I don't know, I
 "am sure.——"

Hammond, who had watched every turn of Agatha's countenance, observed, a moment after she had spoken, that the colour had entirely forsaken her cheeks: her spirits, before agitated, were incapable of supporting this unseasonable raillery, and she complained of feeling very ill. Mrs. Herbert looking at her, was no less alarmed than Hammond; she begged Miss Cassandra to run immediately to the house for a glass of water, and desired Hammond to fetch a bench from another part of the garden.

When they were gone, "My dear girl!" said Mrs. Herbert, "I could kill myself for
 "having thus distressed you! Had I the least
 "idea

“ idea I should have given you a moment’s
“ serious pain, I would not have behaved
“ thus for the world. Pray forgive me !
“ Yet I shall never forgive myself ; to receive
“ pleasure from wantonly giving a sensation
“ of uneasiness to any one, is a barbarous ha-
“ bit ; and from this moment I disclaim it.
“ You shall tell me all that passes in your
“ heart, if it will be the smallest relief to
“ you ; if not, you shall not say a word on
“ the subject, and I will never start it
“ more.”

Agatha, as yet unable to reply, pressed her hand, in token of forgiveness and friendship.

Miss Cassandra, who had ran as fast as possible, now returned with the water, and Hammond, at the same moment, arrived with the bench. Mrs. Herbert placed Agatha upon it, and Miss Cassandra held the glass to her lips, inquiring every minute, with much good-natured solicitude, if she was better ; while Hammond, alarmed and uneasy, angry with himself, and still more so with Mrs. Herbert, leaned over her with looks of the tenderest

tenderest anxiety. She soon revived, and attributing her illness to want of sleep and the fatigue of rising too early, entreated them not to mention to any one a trifling ailment which had already left her.

When she was sufficiently recovered to walk, they went into the house, and Agatha going to her chamber to take off her cloak, and to endeavour to regain her spirits before she joined the company, Miss Cassandra followed her and took this opportunity of saying, "I hope, sure, my dear Miss Belmont, it was not my calling the Cassetta a courting room that made you ill; if it was, I should be very sorry. I did not mean at all to say that Mr. Hammond had been courting you. I am sure I never thought of such a thing."

Agatha assured her that her illness proceeded merely from fatigue and want of rest.

"I am sure," said Miss Cassandra, "I am very glad to hear you say so, for I would not have vexed you for the world. Not that I mean to say that Mr. Hammond
" don't

“ don’t like you, for I can see he does : and
“ indeed every body likes you that sees you ;
“ and my brother is much deeper in love
“ with you now than with Mrs. Herbert, for
“ I overheard him telling my sister so. But
“ perhaps I ought not to tell you this, and so,
“ for fear they should be angry with me, you
“ had better not repeat it : however, if you
“ do, don’t say that I told you.”

Agatha assured her that she should not think of repeating it to any one, and, Mrs. Herbert now joining them, they entered the breakfast-room together.

When they were going to their accustomed amusements in the Cassetta, Miss Milson reminded Hammond of his promise; and Mr. Crawford asked permission to join them. Mr. Crawford’s society was equally acceptable to the young and the old, the grave and the gay, and from the natural complacency of his disposition, disposed to be pleased with all who strove to please, his presence was every where courted and prized. His request, therefore, was granted with pleasure, and attended by him, they proceeded as usual to the Cassetta.

As they entered it, Agatha trembled and turned pale. Hammond, who had walked by her side, and whom nothing could have induced to quit her for a moment, remarked the change in her countenance, and pressing her hand gently, while the attention of the rest was engaged by a favourite myrtle Miss Milson had called them to admire, whispered, “ Dear object of all my hopes and wishes !
“ whom beyond every one on earth I prize,
“ adore, esteem—how dear is this spot to
“ me ! dearer than even *you* imagine. There
“ is a reason why, since you quitted it, it has
“ blessed me beyond all——.”

The rest now returning prevented his proceeding ; and Agatha, though this address had served to add to her embarrassment and confusion, felt an emotion of pleasure as new as it was delightful. The mystery in his last words, though it surprized and perplexed, did not alarm her ; and she wished the myrtle had grown a little farther off—only—that she might have heard them explained. If what she felt were indeed love, as she now more than suspected, she found that it differed greatly

greatly from Mrs. Herbert's description, and bore still less resemblance to her mother's; it was neither so delightful as the one, nor so dreadful as the other. Its sweets and its bitters were so intimately blended that it seemed impossible to separate them. The pleasure she now felt was alloyed with a confused sensation of uneasiness, as the pain she had felt two hours before was tempered with some portion of pleasure.

C H A P. VIII.

EVERY one being seated round the table, Hammond requested their indulgence on the subject of the little narration he had promised, to which, he said, he was unable to add any graces of diction, and which would have no other recommendation than being "a round unvarnished tale" of an action that did honour to human nature. Mrs. Herbert reminded him that he had promised to relate any other circumstances which might interest them, besides the one to which he particular-

ly alluded; and Miss Milson added her entreaties that he would “become a biographer, and not merely the reciter of an anecdote, and begin his relation from the commencement of his life.”

“The commencement of my life,” said Hammond, “had little in it which deserves to be repeated, or which differed from the common events befalling others. My parents dying while I was at school, the care of my education devolved on a sister whose memory I am bound to revere, and whose virtues I shall in vain endeavour to imitate. Ten years older than myself, with a mind richly cultivated, and a natural understanding superior to most others, she was every way qualified for the task she was destined to perform. In every period of my youth, her attention and care were unremitting, and she never lost an opportunity of inculcating the duties enforced by her own example. If I have a virtue or a merit, I owe it to her.”

“You have many of both,” said Mr. Crawford; “and this generous and grateful acknowledgement is not the least of them.”

Agatha

Agatha looked at Mr. Crawford with a smile of pleasure ; she had always beheld him with regard, and even with affection, but he had never appeared so amiable in her eyes as at that moment.

After expressing his thanks for the flattering opinion Mr. Crawford entertained of him, Hammond proceeded : “ When I quitted
“ school, before I went to the University, I
“ spent some months with my sister ; and
“ those were the happiest as well as most in-
“ structive of my life : not an hour passed in
“ which I did not derive some benefit from
“ the lessons she inculcated. At length, to
“ my regret, I left her to finish my educa-
“ tion at Oxford. Attached to study as well
“ from inclination as from the duty I con-
“ ceived imposed upon me of profiting by
“ the opportunity afforded me of improve-
“ ment, I devoted my whole time to it, till,
“ by too intense application, my health ma-
“ terially suffered : a cause of illness perhaps
“ not very common at either university.”

Mr. Crawford smiled ; and Mrs. Herbert said, “ Very far from it, I believe. Of the
I 3 “ young

“ young men of fortune who are sent to the
“ university as the finishing stroke of their
“ learning, there is not, upon a moderate
“ calculation, above one in ten who does not
“ go thither a dunce and return a rake or a
“ coxcomb : and perhaps both. I do not
“ mean to include in my censure those who
“ are sent to qualify themselves for any pro-
“ fession : study is necessary for them, and I
“ believe they pursue it.”

“ That there are many who fail to profit
“ by the advantages there afforded them of
“ instruction, is, I fear, too true,” said Mr.
Crawford ; “ yet to say, that only one in ten
“ makes a due use of his time is perhaps too
“ severe.”

“ Say one in five then,” replied Mrs.
Herbert ; “ and I am certain you will be
“ within the mark. But I cannot resist the
“ temptation of proving my assertion, by a
“ recent example which accident brought
“ within my own knowledge. My Uncle
“ being absent one day, it fell to my share
“ to entertain two young men who had just
“ quitted the university. They had the cha-
“ racter

“ racter of men of fashion, and, with re-
“ gard to their understandings, as report said
“ nothing to the contrary, they were supposed
“ ed passable, at least. When they had paid
“ me the trivial attentions which politeness
“ enjoined, I had the pleasure of hearing
“ their conversation with each other. After
“ ringing the usual changes of a pretty col-
“ lege, good apartments, excellent wine, the
“ best horse in England, and a new gig, one
“ of them observed to the other, that he had
“ taken three trips to London and back again
“ in four and twenty hours each, since the
“ other left college, and declared that he had
“ been ten times in London, and had never
“ yet seen it by day-light. For my part,
“ returned the other, that is a kind of plea-
“ sure for which I never had any relish. A
“ snug room and a sofa were all I cared for
“ when I was at college. I lounged and slept
“ upon mine from morning till night, and
“ should have been the most comfortable and
“ happiest man in Oxford, if it had not been
“ for the confounded noise of a fellow just
“ over my head, that played most execrably

“ on the hautboy, and another at a very little distance, who employed himself in nursing half a dozen pointer puppies that tormented me with their continual yelping. I think, continued Mrs. Herbert, that from the confession of these gentlemen there were four who did not employ their time to the best possible advantage; will it not, therefore, be indulgent to suppose that that the fifth belonged to the order of Mr. Hammond?”

“ I wish,” said Mr. Crawford, “ that those who are proof against the serious admonitions of their friends, could hear Mrs. Herbert expose their conduct as it deserves; that as the dread of ridicule leads many into vice it might retrieve its character by conducting others to virtue. But by interrupting Mr. Hammond thus, we delay and suspend our own pleasure.”

Hammond, at the united request of every one, now proceeded in his narration.

“ My illness threatening to terminate in a consumption, obliged me to leave Oxford; and, attended by my sister, I went immediately

“diately to Bristol, where all the tenderness
“and care that ever the most beloved of husbands
“experienced from the tenderest of
“wives, could not exceed what I received
“from her. Never absent from my sight a
“moment, she appeared to have no thought,
“no wish but my recovery; while the efforts
“she made to overcome the depression
“of her own spirits for my sake,—to talk
“cheerfully, to smile when her heart was
“sinking within her, were but so many additional
“sources of endearment to my heart.
“At length her prayers were heard: my
“health returned, and with it that sweet and
“natural serenity which always distinguished
“her countenance. Never shall I forget
“when first my appetite and strength returned,
“the sweet tears of delight which sparkled
“in her eyes: from prudence and affection
“till then restrained, they at last, found
“vent; and she wept more at my recovery
“than she had done during my illness.”

Hammond paused a moment; the memory
of his sister pressed too strongly on his mind,
and affected him too deeply to suffer him to

go on. Agatha wept; and every one else was too sensibly moved to interrupt the melancholy silence. At length, making an effort to recover himself, he proceeded.

“ When my recovery was all but perfect-
“ ed, a friend with whom I formed an inti-
“ macy at Bristol, was preparing to make a
“ voyage to Gibraltar, and as it was believed
“ likely to re-establish my health entirely,
“ I consented to accompany him. My sister,
“ convinced of the efficacy of a sea voyage,
“ and seeing me well enough to require no
“ farther attendance, consented without re-
“ luctance to what she believed would infal-
“ libly restore my constitution and prevent
“ any danger of a relapse; and we parted
“ alas! never to meet again. Before we ar-
“ rived at Gibraltar our vessel was attacked
“ by a Moorish pirate, and, in spite of our
“ utmost resistance, obliged to yield. We
“ were taken prisoners, and carried into Al-
“ giers.

“ The captain, to whose lot I fell, weary
“ of his piratical life, and satisfied with the
“ booty he had obtained in his several ex-
“ cursions,

“ cursions, determined to reside for the fu-
“ ture at a house he had lately purchased,
“ which though bearing no appearance of
“ splendour in the eyes of an European, was
“ constructed and decorated in the highest style
“ of Moorish magnificence. The garden it was
“ my task together with some negro slaves
“ to cultivate. Treated with caprice and
“ tyranny, and obliged to toil incessantly, had
“ I had motives less powerful than those
“ which induced me to long impatiently to
“ return to my country, I should yet have
“ used every possible means to effect my es-
“ cape; yet some years passed before an op-
“ portunity offered of attempting it with any
“ probability of success. At length, I de-
“ termined, as my only resource, to apply to
“ a Portuguese renegado, who was sometimes
“ consulted by my master on the subject of
“ his improvements, and who frequently,
“ therefore, directed my labours.—As he
“ spoke a little French, I explained to him
“ my situation, assured him of an ample re-
“ ward, and entreated him either to apply to
“ the English consul to have me liberated, or

“ to furnish me with some means of escape
“ without. He made very liberal offers of
“ service, and promised to lose no time in
“ his application to the consul. In a few
“ days he returned and assured me his en-
“ deavours for my release had been unsuc-
“ cessful, and that he had no means of serv-
“ ing me but by favouring my escape, and
“ putting me on board a little vessel he
“ would hire for the purpose, and in which
“ I might be conducted to some European port.
“ I accepted his offer with transport, and it
“ was agreed that late in the evening of the
“ next day, I should repair to a gate, the key
“ of which he would, under some pretext,
“ procure and leave under the leaf of a date
“ tree near it ; and that I should find the
“ vessel in waiting for me. I followed his in-
“ structions, found the key as specified, and
“ opening the gate with trembling impati-
“ ence, proceeded by the directions he had
“ given me towards the sea shore. It was
“ now almost dark, and I went forward as
“ quickly yet as silently as possible, wishing,
“ and, at the same time, dreading to hear the
“ sound

“ found of voices, lest, instead of my deliver-
“ ers, I should be met by enemies. At
“ length I distinguished footsteps, and a mo-
“ ment after, heard the renegado in a low
“ tone of voice, calling to me in French. I
“ replied immediately; but scarcely had I spo-
“ ken, when I was surrounded by several men,
“ seized, bound, and carried to a dungeon,
“ where I remained all night, in an agony
“ not to be described, which was encreased
“ by the severe reverse of my fortune, from
“ the height of hope and expected liberty,
“ plunged into the gulph of misery, and em-
“ bittered yet more by the reflection of its
“ being the consequence of my own impru-
“ dent and misplaced confidence.

“ When the morning arrived, I was taken
“ from my dungeon, and conveyed again to
“ the garden from whence I had endeavoured
“ to escape, with no other addition to my
“ misery than that of being more narrowly
“ watched than before. The renegado, who
“ had thus treacherously and cruelly betray-
“ ed me, for no purpose, that I could con-
“ ceive, but to ingratiate himself with my
“ master

“ master, since they are generally hated and
“ suspected by the Moors, I saw with a dis-
“ gust and aversion easy to be conceived.
“ Reproaches were futile, and could only
“ have served to encrease my own distresses ;
“ I therefore never spoke to, and avoided as
“ much as possible, one, the frequent sight of
“ whom was now become one of my bitterest
“ torments : and to add to my distress, his
“ visits were more frequent than formerly,
“ and himself apparently treated with more
“ confidence and regard.

“ Deprived now of all hopes of ef-
“ cape, my slavery became every day more
“ irksome and painful. Had I enjoyed the
“ most distant prospect of freedom, I could
“ have supported my sufferings with patience
“ —but I had lost all, and had no hope but
“ in the termination of an existence now be-
“ come a burthen to me.

“ After some time, I remarked that the
“ Portuguese discontinued his visits. I saw
“ him no more, and his place was supplied
“ by a Spaniard, in whose countenance I
“ imagined the marks of benignity were too
“ strong

“ strong to be deceitful. Yet, once deceived,
“ ed, I dared not again place confidence in
“ appearances: and though the Spaniard re-
“ peatedly endeavoured to engage my at-
“ tention, and to induce me to speak to him,
“ I appeared for some time inattentive to his
“ overtures, dreading the repetition of an ar-
“ tifice designed to plunge me yet deeper, if
“ possible, in calamity. At length, howe-
“ ver, reflecting that my situation could not
“ be more miserable, that death would be my
“ greatest blessing, and that an encrease of
“ hardships would only accelerate its arrival,
“ I determined to profit by the next favour-
“ able opportunity of addressing him, and
“ to endeavour once more, by his assistance
“ to procure my emancipation.”

“ Some days elapsed after I had formed
“ this resolution before I saw him again; and
“ the dread of his coming no more, had be-
“ gun to alarm and torture my mind: I ima-
“ gined I had lost the only chance of free-
“ dom I ever might possess, and cursed my
“ own folly in neglecting to court his assist-
“ ance while it was within my reach. At
“ length

“ length he came ; and as he looked over my
“ work, and directed me by signs as usual, I
“ addressed him in French and Italian ; but to
“ no purpose : we could not understand each
“ other. By signs, however, I made him
“ comprehend the distress I endured, and he
“ shook his head in token of condolence and
“ pity. He pointed to himself, and repeat-
“ ed his name ; then making signs to me to
“ do the same, I said, Hammond ; and poin-
“ ting to a kind of spade, the utensil with
“ which I laboured, I shewed him my name
“ carved upon it, under which I had written
“ with the same tool.

‘ Deprived of friends, fortune, home, and
‘ country, a wretched slave in a foreign and
‘ barbarous land, here lingers out his miser-
‘ able existence. Should death, or, by the
‘ blessing of Heaven, any other event, pro-
‘ cure his release from captivity, and this be
‘ read by any future sufferers, let them com-
‘ miserate the anguish he has endured, and
‘ trust, like him, in God : and may the
‘ prayer he now offers for his own release,
‘ be heard by that God for theirs !’

“ He

“ He took the spade, but made signs that
 “ he could not understand the language ; but
 “ repeated frequently, as if to endeavour to
 “ retain it, the name of Hammond. I point-
 “ ed to the high wall which enclosed the gar-
 “ den, by way of asking him to favour my
 “ escape. He shewed by signs that he com-
 “ prehended my meaning and would endea-
 “ vour to serve me. Many days, however,
 “ elapsed before I saw him again ; and when
 “ he did come, instead of walking towards
 “ me as usual, he kept on the other side of
 “ the garden.

“ I now feared I was again betrayed ; and
 “ was relapsing into my former despondency,
 “ when, being employed to work in a part of
 “ the garden near the haram of the Moor, I
 “ heard a female voice in a song repeat my
 “ name. I started, and listening with atten-
 “ tion, heard these words sung very distinct-
 “ ly. ‘ Fear not, Hammond, to confide in
 “ the Spaniard ; he pities you, and will ob-
 “ tain your freedom.’ Astonished and transf-
 “ ported, I scarcely dared trust my senses,
 “ and believed myself in a dream. When
 “ the

“ the first emotions of amazement were over,
“ I listened again, and again heard the same
“ words sung, but no others. After they
“ had been repeated thus for nearly an hour,
“ the voice ceased. I returned thanks to
“ Heaven for the prospect now opened to my
“ view ; and performed my allotted portion
“ of labour with chearfulness and alacrity.
“ The sweet influence of hope banished in a
“ moment every idea of present suffering ;
“ and though all was yet doubt and uncer-
“ tainty, I have known few days happier
“ than the one which succeeded this. One
“ only other day passed, in which my impa-
“ tience to see the Spaniard again became ex-
“ treme, before he entered the garden. I
“ would have flown to meet him, but pru-
“ dence forbad ; and I was obliged to wait
“ till he came towards me, appearing to di-
“ rect me as usual. I endeavoured by signs
“ to assure him of my gratitude, and to re-
“ peat my prayers for assistance, when drop-
“ ping a letter upon the ground, and cover-
“ ing it with a piece of turf which he remov-
“ ed with his foot, he left me with a coun-
“ tenance

“ tenance and air of affected severity. I was
“ careful not to quit the spot, yet some hours
“ passed before I could seize an opportunity
“ of taking up the letter; at last, however,
“ I found an opportunity, and no one being
“ near me, opened it with trembling impa-
“ tience. But what was my astonishment at
“ sight of a well-known hand! The letter I
“ read too often, and it is too deeply engra-
“ ved on my heart for me to find any neces-
“ sity to have recourse to it now: but be-
“ fore I repeat it, I must go back to a cir-
“ cumstance which befel me at school, and
“ which I omitted to mention in its place.

“ Among my school associates was a Jew-
“ boy named Israeli, an orphan, whom the
“ loss of all his friends and gratitude to his
“ deceased father, had placed under the pro-
“ tection of the worthy clergyman who kept
“ the school—As he was good tempered and
“ obliging, and, above all, oppressed and un-
“ fortunate, since, on account of his religion
“ he was hated and ridiculed by every other
“ in the school, I felt a pity and even friend-
“ ship for him which induced me to take
“ his

his part when insulted, and my companions
in consequence called me Smouchy the se-
cond. I was insensible to their ridicule, and
performing a part dictated by duty and
humanity, persisted in defending him when
unjustly attacked. He was destined for a
merchant, and different pursuits separating
us, I never saw him after I left school.
Imagine, therefore, my surprize when I
found that this letter was from him, and
that to his friendship and grateful heart I
should, in all probability, owe my free-
dom. The letter, which I should despise
myself if I could forget, was this.

To the kind heart of the noble Ham-
mond I have been, many and many are the
times, indebted for comfort and protection.
His situation is misery itself! and what
were I, or what should I deserve, if, when
I have discovered his distress, I could call
my fortune my own till it had restored him
to liberty? The hand of that God, whom,
however we differ in other tenets of belief,
we both worship, has guided us to the same
country, and enabled me, I hope, to repay

‘ a part of the obligations I owe to you.
‘ Here fixed as a merchant, my fortune is
‘ ample: I have offered as much of it as is
‘ necessary for your ransom. My offers have
‘ been at last accepted; and to morrow
‘ morning at day break, if the wind serves,
‘ the kind, the generous Hammond will em-
‘ bark in the vessel destined to conduct him
‘ to his home and country. Too, too happy
‘ shall I be if he sometimes remembers with
‘ friendship and esteem his sincere and grate-
‘ ful,

AARON ISRAELI.’

“ Judge of my feelings when I had read
“ this letter! Snatched at once from the
“ lowest abyss of misery to happiness and
“ freedom, and that by the generous exer-
“ tions of one whom pity and common hu-
“ manity alone had induced me to befriend,
“ and for my trifling services to whom I ne-
“ ver expected nor thought of a return. I
“ would have given the world to have seen
“ him and expressed my gratitude; but there
“ was no one to whom I could apply, and
“ I was

" I was obliged to leave to his own generous-
" heart the task of speaking for me, and as-
" suring him of all I felt.

" I continued my toil as usual, and re-
" marked no difference in the treatment I
" received, till the evening, when, instead of
" being locked into my little hut by the side
" of that occupied by the negroes, as had al-
" ways been the case before, I was suffered
" to continue in the garden. Had the com-
" panions of my toil evinced the smallest
" traces of compassion for my sufferings, or
" even appeared sensible of their own, I could
" not have parted from them without com-
" punction of heart, nor have left without
" pain, other sharers of a misery from which
" I was on the point of being deliver-
" ed: but they had always seemed uncon-
" scious of their own misfortunes and regard-
" less of mine, which at this minute was a
" consolation to me, and prevented even the
" shadow of a regret at leaving them behind
" me.

" The night was still and calm. The
" moon now glimmering through a cloud,
" ap-

“ appeared yet more resplendent through the
“ veil which covered her, and now sailing be-
“ yond it ‘ serene in cloudless majesty’ cast
“ her beams on the palace of the Moor, or
“ darted them through the trees across the
“ paths I traversed. No sound was heard—
“ not even a breeze disturbed the leaves above
“ me—no voice interrupted the universal
“ calm of nature. Here, even at the hour of
“ midnight, in the most remote village, some
“ sound intervenes to break the gloomy si-
“ lence,—the dog “ bays the moon,” the owl
“ screams, the wind agitates the trees, or
“ some stream murmurs in its course—but
“ there, all is hushed as death. Struck by
“ the gloomy stillness, had fear instead of
“ hope had possession of my mind, sorrow
“ and despondency instead of exultation and
“ joy, my feelings had been overpowered,
“ my faculties suspended, and nature must
“ have sunk under the depression. But the
“ veil of misery was removed—fair prospects
“ opened once more on my enraptured sight,
“ and the face of nature formed but a con-
“ trast to the animated delight that glowed
“ in

“ in my breast. With an impatience more
“ easily imagined than expressed I counted
“ the hours till morning should arrive.

“ The morning at length came—and eve-
“ ry added moment encreased my impati-
“ ence; at first, joined only with hope, even
“ that impatience was delightful, now, min-
“ gled with fear, it was becoming agony,
“ when, with delight and transport unuttera-
“ ble, I beheld the approach of some Moor-
“ ish sailors. They opened the massy gate
“ and conducted me to the sea shore, where
“ the vessel lay at anchor. A brisk gale
“ arose—We set sail; and with a heart
“ overflowing with gratitude to Heaven and
“ my deliverer, after an absence of six years,
“ I found myself returning to my country,
“ and, dearer yet, as I then fondly hoped, to
“ my sister.

“ To my equal astonishment and delight,
“ I was addressed by my name, and in my
“ own language, by a female voice, which I
“ instantly recognized as the same I had heard
“ in the haram. I turned round, and beheld
“ a lady young, beautiful, and interesting.

“ Her

“ Her fine black eyes sparkled with intelligence, and her countenance beamed with the most animated pleasure. On my expressing my surprise and joy at this unexpected meeting——”

“ I am sure,” said Miss Cassandra, “ before you go any farther, I am sure you fell in love with her.”

Hammond smiled and continued : “ On my expressing my pleasure and surprise, she informed me that to one and the same person we both owed our deliverance.”

“ It will be as I said,” cried Miss Cassandra. “ I am sure of it.”

“ Conceal the assurances of your penetration for a few minutes only,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ that we may be convinced whether or not they are just. Mr. Hammond go on ; I am all impatience.”

“ When we had both sufficient collection of spirits to speak with coolness of the several events that had befallen us,” pursued Hammond, “ she informed me, that she was the daughter of a Spaniard, who having formed a friendship with Mr. Ammerville,

“ a young merchant then on his travels, had
“ introduced him to her ; that they soon be-
“ came attached to each other, and her fa-
“ ther, notwithstanding the difference of
“ country and religion, approving the con-
“ nection, they were shortly after married,
“ and she returned with him to England,
“ where she became the mother of two in-
“ fants, now under the protection of their fa-
“ ther. Anxious to see her parents and her
“ native abode once more, she went on board
“ a vessel intended to conduct her to Spain,
“ leaving her children to the care of her hus-
“ band, whose numerous and extensive mer-
“ cantile concerns prevented his accompany-
“ ing her. The ship in which she was a pas-
“ senger was captured by a pirate and taken
“ to Algiers, where she was given as a present
“ to the Moor to whom I was captive, and
“ placed in his Seraglio. Fortunately, she
“ said, her person did not captivate the
“ Moor ; but in continual dread of being
“ conducted to his presence, and distracted
“ at the separation from her husband and
“ children, her health began to decline, and
“ she

“ she was sinking fast into the grave, where
“ only she dared hope for a release from sor-
“ row, when the Spanish renegado, who, by
“ his application to the noble Israeli after-
“ wards effected my deliverance, by accident
“ discovered her situation. He had been a
“ servant to her father, and anxious, there-
“ fore, to obtain her freedom, applied to
“ Israeli, whose liberality he well knew, to
“ offer a sum of money for her ransom.
“ This was readily complied with; the Moor
“ consented to the terms proposed, and every
“ thing was determined upon for her depar-
“ ture, when the Spaniard found means to
“ inform her that a countryman of her hus-
“ band’s, whose name was Hammond, was a
“ slave there; that he wished to procure his
“ freedom, but that once deceived by ano-
“ ther, he saw I suspected his sincerity; that
“ this rendered him miserable, since it was
“ now become his only consolation to expiate
“ in some measure by services to his fellow
“ creatures the crime he had, through the
“ dread of death, committed against his God.
“ He therefore entreated her to let me hear

“ her speak from her apartments, which now,
“ since her ransom had been agreed upon,
“ and she was allowed more freedom, she
“ could with ease, and to assure me of his
“ sincerity : In the mean time, he would
“ contrive to have me employed near her, and
“ to prevent premature suspicion, would him-
“ self treat me with distance and coolness, if
“ any one was present, or likely to observe
“ us. And this, continued Mrs. Ammerville,
“ was the cause of the voice you heard, and
“ which must to you have appeared the effect
“ of enchantment.”

“ After being delayed some time on our
“ passage by contrary winds, we were at last
“ safely landed at Gibraltar, where we were
“ to continue till some English vessel should
“ arrive to take us to our country. Some
“ months elapsed, during which our impa-
“ tience was extreme. At length a Moorish
“ vessel touched at Gibraltar, the master of
“ which was charged with a letter for Mrs.
“ Ammerville. She had no sooner opened
“ it and read a few words, than she dropped
“ the letter, burst into tears, and exclaimed,
“ he

“ he has escaped—he is free—thank God !
“ thank God !” Having never heard her say
“ that she had left any friend in captivity, I
“ enquired with astonishment, who had es-
“ caped—who was free? Israeli ! she said,
“ the noble Israeli ! Yes, Mr. Hammond, I
“ can no longer conceal, no longer bury in
“ silence, an act of generosity that will melt
“ your very soul ! Unable, by his largest of-
“ fers for your ransom to obtain it, the Moor,
“ at last, on his repeating his solicitations,
“ replied, that he wanted slaves not money,
“ and that if he would obtain your freedom,
“ he must work himself in your place. This
“ taunting offer, which it was never imagined
“ would be accepted, Israeli eagerly embrac-
“ ed ; and the Moor, finding a ferocious
“ pleasure in humbling one whose fortune
“ and the general esteem he had acquired
“ had made him long the object of his ha-
“ tred and envy, consented, on this condition,
“ to your freedom.”

“ At once astonished—shocked—and pe-
“ netrated with gratitude and admiration, I
“ became for some minutes insensible of

“ every thing, and Mrs. Ammerville’s endeavours with difficulty recovered my senses and reason. When I had regained sufficient composure to hear what she had yet to relate, she assured me that he was now at liberty ; that, in spite of his religion, which renders those who profess it more hateful to the Moors than even Christians, he was so generally beloved, that he effected his escape with a considerable part of his property, and would soon, as the Spaniard assured her he doubted not, arrive safe in England. But why? O why? said I, did you not tell me this? I would have flown to rescue him, and have endured a slavery ten thousand times more dreadful, rather than that another should suffer thus for me! He was aware of that, replied Mrs. Ammerville. He knew your heart, and was convinced that you would act thus if ever his situation came to your knowledge; as he conducted me to the vessel, therefore, by supplications and entreaties which I knew not how to resist from my deliverer, he obtained from me a solemn
“ pro-

“ promise not to reveal his situation to you.
“ That situation, Heaven be praised ! now at
“ an end, I am absolved from my promise.”

“ Noble ! noble Israeli !” said Mr. Crawford ; “ and noble Hammond ! for I was
“ well aware that you would not be outdone
“ in generosity ! I was convinced you would
“ have flown to rescue him at the expence
“ of your own liberty. The contest of Damon and Pythias, being the consequence of
“ a long and tried attachment, and as death,
“ to one prepared for it, is less dreadful than
“ life on such terms, was not so noble. For-
“ give my interruption ; but my heart was
“ full, and I could not suppress my admiration.
“ And have you met since ?”

“ We have not,” replied Hammond ;
“ but I have every reason to believe from the
“ information I have since received, that he
“ is safe, and on his passage to England.—
“ The first English ship which arrived at
“ Gibraltar conveyed Mrs. Ammerville and
“ myself safe to England, and I had the satisfaction of conducting her to her husband
“ and family. Immediately after which, I

“ set out to meet my sister—The destruction of
“ my hopes, and my subsequent anguish, I need
“ not, nor can I paint. Thanks to the seraphic
“ sweetness of the kindest of friends,” continued he, looking at Agatha, “ my mind re-
“ gained a calm I could not have conceived
“ possible: though there are yet moments
“ when the remembrance of my loss is agony.”

Hammond now ceased speaking, and Miss Milson observed that his sufferings had indeed been severe; “ and doubtless,” pursued she, “ souls possessed of sensibility
“ feel the poignancy of affliction more exquisitely than others: yet to cultivated
“ minds, minds stored with information,
“ there are numberless consolatory reflections
“ not known to the unlettered and ignorant.
“ For instance, in your captivity, by recurring to the page of history, you might have
“ reflected on Alfred when once a cowherd,
“ on the imprisonment of Robert, brother to
“ the Conqueror, on that of Richard the second in Pontefract, and of Edward the second in Caernarvon castle; and remembering how many others had suffered, nay,
“ that perhaps, at that moment, there were
“ some

"some in yet greater distress, have found
"your own mitigated."

"That is a mode of consolation which I
"have often found recommended," said
Agatha, "yet to me it has always appeared
"incapable of answering the end proposed.
"Were I unhappy, the knowledge that others
"were more so, would, instead of lessening,
"add to my afflictions. I would rather
"reflect on those who were happy. I
"would say to myself—'Tis true I am
"wretched—but thank Heaven all are not
"like me: there are some, endued with
"the same feelings, who at this moment en-
"joy all their hearts can wish; whom the sun
"rises but to bless, and sets but to see them
"close their eyes in peace and contentment.
"Yes! thank Heaven, all are not like me!
"—On reflection, do you not think with me,
"Miss Milson?" asked Agatha.

"My lovely friend is singular in her
"ideas," said Miss Milson; "yet there is
"much justice in the remark; and, for want
"of weighing the reasoning of the authors I
"have read, I am, perhaps, too apt to adopt
"their mode of argument."

" I had no patience with the Portuguese
" renegado," said Miss Cassandra ; " he be-
" haved so very ill natured and deceitful,
" But Mrs. Ammerville should not have
" been married, and then the story would have
" been very natural, and just like what one
" reads in books ; for when two people have
" been unhappy together they always fall in
" love and marry."

" A familiarity of situations and distresses
" is without doubt a strong cementer of at-
" tachment both in friendship and love,"
said Hammond.

" And yet there is something selfish in
" that," said Mrs. Herbert ; " for unless we
" pity distresses from which our own situ-
" ation is exempt, with as much sincerity as
" those we may or do actually feel, we can-
" not be truly compassionate. The rich man
" tortured by the gout, should commiserate
" the penniless wanderer, doomed to endure
" sufferings he is never likely to experience,
" as truly as he does his affluent neighbour
" labouring under the excruciating torment
" of his own malady : if he does not, his pi-
" ty is selfishness not sensibility."

" It

“ It is certainly right, thus to search every
“ sentiment to its source,” said Mr. Crawford,
“ nor to take any opinion on trust,
“ however plausible it may appear. We
“ shall thus learn to retain those only which
“ are founded in justice and propriety, and
“ to discard all that are erroneous and specious.
“ But we must at all times remember that it is as unjust
“ universally to reject, as it would be to embrace opinions
“ because they are among those commonly
“ received.”

“ I am determined,” said Miss Cassandra,
“ that for the future I will always enquire
“ and know the meaning of every thing.
“ One thing very much surprizes me, Mr.
“ Hammond, and that is, that considering
“ you worked so much in the sun you should
“ be no browner than you are.”

“ Excepting during the months of July
“ and August,” said Hammond, “ the heat
“ at Algiers is by no means intense; and in
“ almost all sultry climes, Providence has so
“ ordered it, that the trees afford a shade im-
“ pervious to the sun.”

“ Yes,” said Miss Cassandra, “ Providence,

" I see, takes care of even our complexions
" I have learnt a great deal this morning,
" and I will try to remember it, I am deter-
" mined."

" We have all learnt a great deal," said Mr. Crawford; " and, I trust, there is not one
" of us who will not return to the house
" both wiser and better than when they quit-
" ted it. The act of friendship, generosity,
" and heroism we have now heard, will be
" for ever recorded in our hearts; while the
" glorious emulation a deed like this inspires,
" shall whisper to us, with the voice of An-
" gels, " Go, and do thou likewise."

C H A P. IX.

AFTER some further conversation, it being too late to pursue any other employment that morning, they returned to the house. Hammond seized an opportunity of entreating Agatha to grant him one half hour's conversation. Agatha at once wished and feared to consent. She now knew her
own

own heart, and trembled at complying with its dictates, lest they should be contrary to prudence or propriety. That love was at all times, and in all shapes the most dreadful of evils, and therefore to be guarded against and shunned she had always been taught, but how it was proper to conduct herself when she loved and was beloved she had never been instructed, and with a mind anxious on every occasion to act aright, she trembled lest she should ignorantly commit a fault or incur blame. On her hesitating to comply with his request, Hammond repeated his solicitations, assuring her that he wished only to clear his conduct from the charge of inconsistency, caprice, and ingratitude which he was conscious it merited in her eyes, and that, denied this, he should be miserable; he therefore conjured her to indulge him with some minutes only in the Cassetta the next morning. This, after what had passed, she positively refused; but, at last, won by the earnestness of his solicitations, she consented to walk with him towards Jemima's cottage some time in the afternoon, if it was possible to disengage herself

herself from the company : or, if prevented that day, to endeavour to gain an opportunity some time in the next.

In the afternoon she attempted, but in vain, to perform her promise. She had scarcely reached the walk leading to the road, before she was joined by Miss Milson. Hammond overtaking her, could with difficulty conceal his chagrin and disappointment at sight of Miss Milson.

The remainder of the day was no more favourable to their wishes ; and Agatha, anxious to give Hammond pleasure, and anxious to receive the promised explanation, was almost tempted to seize the only certain opportunity, by rising early in the morning, as he had at first proposed. But reflecting that if she did, it would in all probability be known and remarked, and that she should lay herself open to the jests of others, if not of Mrs. Herbert, she determined to avoid it if possible, and to make one other attempt at least before she had recourse to a method she could at any time adopt.

When at night she retired to her room, she sat down to ruminate on the events of the day.

Hammond,

Hammond, whom the various distresses he had endured, had endeared to her more than ever, she was now convinced loved her with all the tenderness and sincerity possible, while her own heart, she was equally certain, returned his affection as it deserved. One only idea alarmed her and embittered the pure pleasure she would otherwise have felt : Her parents might not approve the choice her heart had made ; sworn enemies to love, they might perhaps condemn her indulgence of it, and bid her throw from her bosom all that now charmed and delighted it. Yet Hammond's character was unexceptionable ; his rank in life, though perhaps not equal to her own, placed him, she imagined, beyond the reach of a refusal on that account, since wealth and grandeur she knew Lady Belmont contemned, and had always declared incapable of bestowing happiness. What then should impede her wishes ? Nothing. No ! the aversion to love, which they had always inculcated, might be intended merely to guard her heart against its seductions till she met with an object on whom it could with justice and
prudence

prudence be bestowed : that object they had never seen—for they knew not Hammond. The clouds which had on the first reflection obscured her promised felicity, thus dispersed at once, a prospect brighter than ever opened to her view. She determined, however, not to give full scope to her imagination ; since, though it was highly improbable, it was alas ! possible her hopes might be checked ; and after she had granted the promised interview to Hammond, which justice to him and to herself equally demanded, to shun, as well for his sake as her own, whatever might tend to the encrease of an attachment as yet unsanctioned by parental approbation.

The next morning passed nearly as usual. In the afternoon she made another attempt to walk out alone, and was not interrupted. Hammond pursued her with eager and impatient steps, and just as she had opened the gate at the termination of the grounds, he overtook her.

“ Dear ! dear Miss Belmont ! ” he exclaimed ; “ how shall I ever be sufficiently
“ grateful

“grateful for this condescension? Happy!

“happy moments! dearest of my life!”

“Be assured,” said Agatha, colouring, “that
“your happiness has never been indifferent to
“——” The time had been that she
would not have feared to say to *me*——but
she hesitated and was unable to proceed.

“I am, I am convinced of what you would
“say,” said Hammond; “and nothing but the
“sweet hope that my happiness has been some-
“times the object of your wishes could have
“emboldened me to confess every feeling of
“my heart: those feelings have often led me
“to act with inconsistency and apparent in-
“gratitude.—I have seemed cold and indif-
“ferent when most I have loved, and insen-
“sible of your sweetest efforts to restore my
“peace of mind at the very moment when
“that peace depended wholly on you.

“From the first moment when, like my
“Guardian Angel, you recalled me to life
“and reason, when your soothing voice
“taught me resignation to the divine will,
“and enabled me to bless his name who gave
“and who therefore has a right to take
“away,

“ away, from that moment I felt that all the
“ future blessings of my life were centred in
“ you. It seemed too as if Heaven merci-
“ fully intended thus to recompense me for
“ all I had suffered, since the same hour
“ which saw me robbed of one beloved ob-
“ ject, bestowed another.

“ Some days had passed before I knew and
“ recollected that Miss Belmont, Agatha
“ Belmont was the daughter of Sir Charles
“ and Lady Belmont, whose names together
“ with their ample possessions I remembered
“ formerly to have heard mentioned. As you
“ simply called them by the names of father
“ and mother when you spoke of them, the
“ improbability that a daughter of theirs
“ should be in the friendless and unprotected
“ state in which I found you never suggested
“ the idea that they were your parents. When
“ at last I learnt it, the fatal intelligence
“ struck like ice to my heart. My own easy,
“ and till then I had thought, affluent for-
“ tune dwindled into nothing when compared
“ with that of the heiress of Sir Charles Bel-
“ mont; and I determined, as much as pos-
“ sible

“ fible to conceal an attachment which every
“ hour encreased, that I might avoid the
“ possibility of endangering a happiness infi-
“ nitely dearer than my own.

“ Sensible that the world might con-
“ demn your continuance with me, I deter-
“ mined to hazard every thing, even the
“ loss of your friendship, rather than purchase
“ my own pleasure at the expence of your
“ future estimation in life. Repeatedly had
“ I endeavoured to introduce the painful sub-
“ ject, and as repeatedly been prevented,
“ when Miss Milson’s proposal enabled me
“ to urge your departure, though at that mo-
“ ment I felt to have lost in you every hope
“ of happiness for ever.

“ Dangerous as I knew the indulgence, I
“ could not resist complying with Sir John’s
“ entreaties to continue here for some time,
“ not aware of the many sweet yet fatal cir-
“ cumstances which would throw me off my
“ guard. Your assurances of friendship,
“ your artless endeavours to speak comfort
“ to my distracted heart, were but so many
“ sources of misery, since they encreased the
“ value

“ value of a prize I dared not hope to ob-
“ tain. At length, the tears you shed ac-
“ companied by the sweet and artless evi-
“ dence of an affection surpassing, as, at that
“ moment I first fondly hoped, even the ge-
“ nerous friendship you had professed, forbade
“ any longer concealment, and surmounted
“ every determination I had formed. I
“ avowed my love, and had even then laid
“ open my whole heart to you, had not your
“ exhausted spirits prevented my pursuing a
“ subject they were then unable to sustain.

“ Every spot that has been visited by a be-
“ loved object, every scene that calls to mind
“ a moment of delight passed with them, is
“ sought again, with avidity, and beheld with
“ enthusiastic reverence. We can even quit
“ those for whose sake we love that spot to
“ retrace in idea the blessings it has bestow-
“ ed: and I fled from even you to visit the
“ scene I loved for your sake—to kiss the
“ table whereon you had leaned—to gaze
“ with rapture on the room where first I
“ learned to hope you loved!”

“ But now, will you—can you forgive
“ what

“ what I am going to relate ? Will you not
 “ accuse me of dishonour——of want of ge-
 “ nerosity ?—I dare not say it, till you have
 “ first promised you will forgive me.”

He paused, and Agatha, from the excess of
 her emotions, was silent. He repeated his
 request, and she at last replied, “ Yes—I must
 “ forgive you ; for you cannot act disho-
 “ nourably—’tis impossible.”

“ See then this paper, dropped by you in
 “ a spot thus rendered doubly dear. These
 “ lines were folded outwards, and I read them
 “ —trust me—believe me—my beloved Aga-
 “ tha ! I read them before I knew they were
 “ yours or what they were :

“ In him ’twas sweet—how sweet to trace
 “ The semblance of Maria’s face ;
 “ And still, as friendship lent its balm,
 “ By gentle arts his griefs to calm,
 “ To hush his many cares to rest,
 “ And blest ! blest task ! to make him blest !”

“ How ! O how shall I tell you—how
 “ paint my feelings when I read those sweet
 “ lines !——And will you—can you—do
 “ you forgive me ?”

“ O Mr.

“ O Mr. Hammond! indeed—indeed when I wrote those lines I had no idea that my heart was sensible of any feelings beyond those of friendship.”

“ *When* you wrote those lines—dear, dear, confession! then *now* Miss Belmont—my all—my Agatha! now then you have—.”

Agatha burst into tears. Hammond implored her forgiveness, while by the tenderest endeavours he strove to recover her agitated spirits; and at length drew from her a confession of every sentiment of her heart.

Recollecting that their absence might be remarked, Agatha proposed to return to the house; and Hammond, though he could have wished those minutes prolonged for years, acquiesced, sensible of the propriety of returning without delay, since the half hour had been already exceeded.

Agatha, her mind agitated though happy, leaned on his arm, while his other hand held and pressed tenderly the one which rested on him.

When they were near the house they observed a post-chaise driving towards them. It approached,

approached, and stopping the moment it had passed them, the chaise door opened, and Sir Charles and Lady Belmont jumped out and ran to Agatha, whom with an astonishment apparently almost amounting to terror, they saw leaning on the arm of Hammond. Agatha, in equal astonishment at meeting them, thus suddenly and unexpectedly, ran to her mother and fainted in her arms. Hammond terrified, flew he knew not whither for help—then returning to them almost instantaneously, he took Agatha, yet insensible from the arms of Lady Belmont, and supported her in his own—conjuring her in the tenderest manner to look up—to speak to—but once to speak to him. Sir Charles turned to Hammond, and said, in a tone of equal pride and indignation, putting at the same time his own arm under Agatha's head—
“ She will be better directly, Sir—do not
“ give yourself any farther trouble—leave her
“ to me: the assistance of *strangers* is unnecessary. Agatha! my child! look up; it
“ is your own father that supports you!”
Then turning again to Hammond, “ If you
“ will

“ will procure us a little hartshorn, Sir, I shall
“ be obliged to you.”

By this time however the whole family was assembled round them. Mrs. Herbert held her salts to Agatha's nose, while Lady Belmont chafed her temples, and she began to revive. A chair was then brought, and they placed her in it. Lady Belmont supported her on one side, while Mrs. Herbert went to the other; which Sir Charles observing, he with very little ceremony, moved her on one side and took her place. Agatha now recovered apace, and Lady Belmont observed that it would be better to return home immediately.

“ Better to return home immediately?”
said Sir John Milson; “ but upon my honour
“ and credit it won't though. Why my La-
“ dy Belmont, do you think it shall be said
“ in the country that Sir John Milson baronet
“ and your equal in rank, would not give you
“ a dish of tea and a bit of bread and butter
“ after your journey? No, no, that won't do
“ neither.”

“ We are obliged to you,” said Sir Charles,
“ but we must return immediately.”

“ Upon my honour and credit, but I say
“ you shan’t though, Sir Charles. That would
“ be no how, indeed. And I don’t want to
“ part with Miss neither; she’s a nice lass,
“ and we’re all in love with her. Besides, the
“ man has taken the horses off, and they must
“ fill their bellies too, or what will the
“ world say of Sir John Milson? Come,
“ come, you must stay, Sir Charles—you
“ must indeed.”

Sir Charles and Lady Belmont finding remonstrances vain, and that they would only prolong the disgust Sir John’s manner and address inspired, at length consented to stay to tea, on condition that he would permit them to go the moment it was over.

Agatha was by this time sufficiently recovered to walk into the house, Sir Charles supporting her on one side, and Lady Belmont on the other.

When they were all seated in the drawing room, Sir John turned to Lady Belmont, and said with much exultation of countenance,
“ Now Miss is a little better, one can begin
“ to talk to you a little my Lady—Would you
Vol. I. L “ believe

“ believe it, we had like to have stole a
“ match upon you—Nay, come, however my
“ Lady I will not go so far as to say that nei-
“ ther; but if you had staid a little longer,
“ I do not know what might have happened :
“ upon my honour and credit I think it’s
“ very likely we should have been lucky
“ enough to get your daughter off your hands
“ before you came back.”

“ Sir!” said Lady Belmont, with an air
of equal contempt and indignation; then
looking at her watch, “ I am unwilling, Sir,”
she said, “ to put you to any inconvenience;
“ and as your tea is not ready, we will return
“ without—for it grows late, and we have
“ some affairs to settle at home to night.”

“ It shall come *di—rectly*, my Lady,”
said Sir John; and after ringing the bell, he
returned to his seat and pursued his subject.
“ Why, my Lady, methinks you look rather
“ glum about this marriage affair—But, how-
“ ever don’t go to think that we’d have
“ matched your daughter badly—No, no,
“ that would have been no how; and I have
“ too much respect (and a proper one it is

“ too)

“ too) for my own rank, to do any thing to
“ let down your Ladyship’s. But my son
“ William there, I have a sort of a guess has
“ a sneaking kindness for her now-a-days,
“ and there’s another young man—there he
“ fits—Mr. Hammond—a gentleman, and
“ likely to be a baronet, that has cast a
“ sheep’s eye at her a long while—and has
“ stuck so close to her these two days, that
“ upon my honour and credit, he’ll hardly
“ vouchsafe to look at the victuals on his
“ plate.”

“ Love and marriage, Sir,” said Sir Charles,
“ are not proper subjects, for such a circle as
“ this; and indeed the less they are spoken
“ of or indeed thought of any where the bet-
“ ter—especially where a person is so young
“ as my daughter, and therefore incapable of
“ distinguishing the miseries or comforts at-
“ tending either a married or a single state.”

“ A single state?” repeated Sir John:
“ Why sure, Sir Charles, you would not
“ have your daughter an old maid! would
“ you?”

“ I would have her adopt that mode of
“ life,”

“ life,” replied Sir Charles, “ which, on mature
“ deliberation, she, as well as her parents,
“ shall judge most conducive to her happi-
“ ness.”

“ Then you may be sure she’ll think the
“ married one—or I’ll be hanged: Won’t
“ you Miss?”

Mr. Crawford observing Agatha’s confusion,
and anxious to divert the conversation to ano-
ther channel, enquired if Sir Charles’s journey
had been unattended by any accident, and if
his short passage by sea, had been a pleasant
one. Sir Charles with more complacency
of countenance than he had yet discovered
was preparing to answer his questions, when
Sir John exclaimed hastily, “ Upon my credit
“ but I never thought of that! I dare say you
“ have been among some of them rich Moun-
“ teers to pick out a husband for your daugh-
“ ter.” Sir Charles made no reply.

“ Marriage,” said Mr. Ormistace, “ is by
“ no means a thing of course. It is a state
“ which confers exquisite happiness or exqui-
“ site misery; and no married person ever
“ knew a mediocrity of either: To a mind
“ of

“ of sensibility, therefore, an attachment
“ little short of adoration is necessary if they
“ would not be the most wretched of human
“ beings. Do not you think so?” continued
he, turning to Mr. Crawford.

“ Not entirely,” replied Mr. Crawford.
“ To minds uncommonly refined and sus-
“ ceptible there may possibly be no mediocrity
“ of happiness in a married life: but of such
“ the world does not in general consist: it
“ is chiefly composed of persons of moderate
“ wisdom and moderate sensibility, to whom
“ marriage is a state of common comfort,
“ neither very happy nor very miserable.
“ United most frequently from motives of pru-
“ dence and liking, rather than love or roman-
“ tic attachment, they journey through life
“ together, satisfied rather than pleased with
“ their lot. But I do not mean by saying
“ this to pass a censure on marriage: far from
“ it. By giving us one to share the pains
“ and pleasures incident to human life, it
“ diminishes the one and encreases the other;
“ and for happiness equally exquisite and du-
“ rable we must look beyond an existence

“ which hangs but by a thread, and all whose
“ gayest colours, like the vivid hues that
“ paint the air-blown bubble, may vanish
“ in a moment, destroyed by the very breath
“ which created them.”

“ You are perfectly right in your last remark, Sir,” said Sir Charles; “ those who expect happiness in this life pursue a phantom
“ which constantly eludes their grasp: we
“ have only therefore to wish for that situation likely to make us least miserable.”

“ No!” said Mr. Ormistace; “ be it my
“ lot to know no medium of bliss! I would
“ rather purchase one moment of delight by
“ years of agony, than not have known that
“ moment’s exquisite felicity. It is better to
“ endure all the torments of love than not to
“ have felt its delicious emotions.”

“ Love, as it teaches generosity, benevolence, and honour, is doubtless a source
“ of happiness,” said Mr. Crawford——

“ I beg your pardon, Sir,” said Sir Charles, interrupting him sternly, “ of misery you would
“ say; for its pains sooner or later counterbalance all its pleasures.”

“ I am

“ I am entirely of your opinion, Sir,” said Mr. Craggs. Sir Charles, who found that the conversation was destined to take no other turn, rejoiced at hearing some one at last prepare to argue on his side; and bowing his head, as a mark of approbation, he desired Mr. Craggs to proceed.

“ I said your sentiments were mine,” pursued Mr. Craggs; “ for love, by occasioning
“ frequent sighs, as I have more than once
“ remarked it does, is an injury to the constitution, and induces a lasting impairment
“ of the vital principle. It is a vulgar supposition that every time we sigh a drop of blood
“ falls from our heart: this is not just. But
“ thus far is certain: every sigh we heave presses
“ upon a corner of the heart and indents it, as
“ it were; and those who have died of what
“ is commonly called a broken heart, have,
“ on being opened, been found to have a
“ hole in their heart, the consequence of
“ sighs: sighs therefore shorten the duration
“ of our existence. Then an agitation at
“ sight of the beloved object, which I have
“ likewise noticed in lovers, both shakes and

“ weakens our nerves. Now the nerves are
“ a kind of invifible network covering the
“ mufcles and extending over the whole
“ frame, beginning from the brain; and
“ therefore whatever injures them, impairs
“ the brain likewise; and by every wound
“ of the brain we endanger the feat of the
“ foul, and the habitation, as I may call it,
“ of our reasoning and thinking faculties;
“ which next to life, we ought to ftudy to
“ preferve. One other motive to avoid love
“ you will find in Dr. Buchan’s Domestic
“ medicine, a volume which, though of no
“ deep erudition, is ufeful enough to the un-
“ learned practitioner; and that is, his affer-
“ tion that often nothing can cure love but
“ the poffeffion of the object defired: Now
“ this being often through the perverseneff
“ of parents, guardians, and other malicious
“ and evil-minded perfons, difficult, nay fome-
“ times impoffible to be obtained, it is moft
“ prudent to avoid it altogether.”

Sir Charles liftened in mute aftonifhment.
When Mr. Craggs had done fpeaking and
had refumed his former penvive pofition, Sir

John

John arose and advancing towards Sir Charles, exclaimed.—“ But, upon my credit, Mr. Craggs talks finely—does not he, Sir Charles? O! he knows more than fifty doctors and parsons put together. He is the honourable Mr. Craggs too, Sir Charles—heir to the noble title of my Lord——”

“ Very possibly,” said Sir Charles; then rising to ring the bell, Sir John stopped him—“ Why you won’t leave us yet, Sir Charles? Come, come—now do stay a few days with us, and we’ll be friendly and sociable as we ought to be.”

While this proposal was repeated by Sir John, and as repeatedly rejected by Sir Charles, Agatha, whose spirits were beginning to recover from the shock they had sustained, went to Mrs. Herbert and Miss Milson, and taking each of them by the hand and leading them to Lady Belmont, said, as they approached her, “ I must introduce two of the kindest of my friends to my mother. When I was in great distress, Madam, Miss Milson was a mother to me, since in your absence she supplied

“ your place, and brought me hither with
“ the kind motive of recovering my spirits.
“ To Mrs. Herbert too, I am indebted for a
“ thousand acts of kindness and friendship,
“ and when you know her you will delight
“ like me to call her friend.”

“ My sweet girl!” said Mrs. Herbert,
“ you interpret into acts of kindness all those
“ little attentions which your own goodness
“ and sweet disposition inspire; and it were
“ impossible not to love you. I am sure I
“ shall feel to lose my better half when
“ you are gone: I cannot bear to think
“ of it!”

“ We shall often meet again, I trust!” said
Agatha; “ yet absent as well as present our
“ friendship will remain unchanged.”

“ ’Tis a jewel I would not part with for
“ worlds!” said Mrs. Herbert.

“ Ours too, my dear Miss Milson,” said
Agatha, “ I meant to include in the wish.”

“ Yes, my lovely friend,” said Miss Mil-
son, the tears standing in her eyes.

“ You see, Madam,” said Agatha, “ how
“ fortunate your Agatha has been—what kind
“ friends she has found in your absence.”

“ I shall

“ I shall always think myself under obligations to them both,” said Lady Belmont, curtsying condescendingly.

“ There are others I must point out to your notice,” said Agatha. “ That middle-aged gentleman whose countenance bespeaks the sweet serenity of his mind, that dear and excellent man is Mr. Crawford—he is beloved and esteemed by all, and has been remarkably indulgent and kind to me. The lady who sits next and is now speaking to him, is Mrs. Valentine Milson, whom if you knew you would love; her own affections are centred in her children, two lovely boys, to whom she is the most instructive and indulgent of mothers.”—Agatha now came to Hammond. She coloured and hesitated, and knowing her own inability to speak of him with composure, was tempted to have passed him over; but reflecting in a moment that this would appear particular, and anxious too to introduce him to her mother and to interest her in his favour, she assumed courage, and with as much calmness as possible proceeded; “ That is

" Mr. Hammond, brother to the dear friend
" we have lost ; and he is as good, as amiable
" as she was."

" He does not bear the smallest resemblance to her either in person or manner," said Lady Belmont, coldly.

" Your Ladyship astonishes me," said Miss Milson : " the likeness strikes every one."

" The next," said Agatha, who had somewhat recovered herself, and was anxious to pass on to another, " is Mr. Ormistace—the noble Mr. Ormistace! I call him ; for his acts of charity and benevolence almost exceed belief. I have a long and sweet story to tell you of his goodness."

The carriage was now announced. Agatha, who amid the various emotions that filled and almost overpowered her mind, had never reflected that the moment of departure was so near, turned cold as death, and sitting down on the nearest chair, covered her face with her handkerchief, and burst into tears. Lady Belmont, who from Agatha's countenance on the entrance of the servant, was apprehensive of another fit, was careful not to interrupt

interrupt the tears which she believed so salutary, and as every one was assembling round Agatha, waved her hand, and expressed by signs that she wished them not to appear to notice her.

Agatha, greatly relieved, now rose, and making an effort she knew to be necessary, without allowing herself a moment for reflection, advanced to take leave of every one. Going first to Lady Milson, she said, holding out her hand to her, "Lady Milson—farewell.—Ten thousand, thousand thanks for all your kindresses!—Miss Milson—my dear friend—do not forget me—nor you, my dear Mrs. Herbert—Heaven bless you!—Mr. Crawford farewell—God bless you!—Mr. Ormistace—Mrs. Milson—Mr. William Milson——farewell all——Mr. Hammond——" But here her voice faltered, and she had not power to speak, and she left in his the hand she had held out to him and every one else as she took leave of them. Hammond held her hand and supported her as she walked, in spite of Sir Charles's endeavours to prevent him and to take his place;

place; nor did he quit her till he had put her into the chaise. Sir Charles followed immediately after, and Agatha in vain attempted by leaning forward to take a last look of those she had left; Sir Charles, who sat on that side of her, leaned forward himself to take leave of Sir John, and the chaise drove off.

CHAP. X.

WITH tears and depression Agatha had entered Milson Hall; she had then parted from one she esteemed, and whose society was even then dearer to her than every other; but her depression at entering was happiness compared to what she felt at leaving it. Hammond's presence had enlivened every scene, had rendered every conversation delightful; it was now become necessary to her happiness, and life seemed a blank without it; Mrs. Herbert was become justly dear to her, and for Miss Milson she felt a grateful regard. What then were her feelings at quitting

ting them thus suddenly ! While Lady Belmont's countenance more strongly marked with sternness, and severity than she had ever known it before, equally terrified and distressed her.

A silence of some minutes ensued, which was only interrupted by the sobs Agatha in vain endeavoured to suppress. At length Lady Belmont said, "The hurry of spirits
" you have sustained in the perplexing tumult of company has been too much
" for you, Agatha. A little quiet and repose will restore your wonted serenity. It
" will, I am convinced, said Sir Charles ;
" home, as it is the sphere of virtue, is that of
" comfort likewise."

Agatha, unable to dissemble, made no reply ; she was well aware that they imputed her uneasiness to a wrong cause, and was surprised they should themselves mistake it.

They soon after turned the conversation to the events of their journey, and other ordinary subjects, in which Agatha joined by degrees as cheerfully as she could, fearful they might imagine the pleasure she ought to feel
at

at their return was lost in the grief she experienced at parting from her other friends. Alive to every feeling of nature and virtue, she had always loved her parents with the tenderest affection, had made their wishes the law of her life, and had never intentionally displeased or offended them. To meet them again after their absence, was a source of the purest pleasure, which was only suspended by the mingled emotions that filled her breast, and her sudden separation from him in whom her hopes of happiness were centred, and from others deservedly dear to her. Her first grief, however, being subsided, and Lady Belmont's countenance softening by degrees, amid all the weight which yet sunk her heart, she was sensible of unfeigned pleasure at their return; and a ray of hope sometimes darted into her mind that her separation from Hammond was but temporary; that when they were sensible of his worth he would be no less dear to them than his sister had been; and that they could not destroy the happiness of their only child when they knew on whom it depended.

When

When they arrived at home, Lady Belmont told Agatha that finding herself rather unwell, she wished her to sleep in her apartment, and for that purpose had ordered another bed to be put into it.

"In your room, Madam?" said Agatha, with astonishment.

"Yes, Agatha. Does it give you pain to hear that you will enjoy more of your mother's society than formerly?"

"Certainly not. I was only surprised——"

"Agatha! the time has been that that surprise would have been mixed with pleasure not chagrin! But others—butterfly friends—the acquaintance of a day, have estranged your affections from me!"

"Heaven forbid! I would not for the world you should think so—Indeed! indeed! I do not deserve this——" said Agatha bursting into tears.

"Come my dear girl," said Lady Belmont, much softened, "forgive me—I fear I spoke harshly—I did not mean to distress you thus; but I thought you did not express
"any

“ any pleasure at what I imagined would give
“ you equal delight with myself.” Then kissing her, she wiped her tears, and changed the subject.

During the remainder of the evening, Sir Charles and Lady Belmont evidently studied to amuse Agatha. They conversed on several subjects, apparently with no endeavour but to interest her. They spoke of music, books, of every thing in short but the subject next her heart—the friends she had quitted—and that, and every thing that led to it they studiously avoided. Too grateful to appear indifferent to their efforts to please her, she joined in the conversation with all the cheerfulness she was able to assume; but her heart wandered in spite of herself to other scenes and other subjects, and fled from the present, as void and insipid. She sighed for night, that in the indulgence of silent reflection her mind might stray where only it could find repose, and counted the minutes till the hour of retirement came.

At length it arrived: but the blessings it had promised were denied. Lady Belmont continued,

continued, not without marks of kindness, her endeavours to amuse her; she enumerated every minute particular of her journey, and mentioned a thousand trivial and uninteresting occurrences. Agatha would have given worlds for some minutes of silent and solitary recollection. At length, her mind harrassed, and her spirits worn out, she feigned sleep as her only resource. This procured her the silence she sought; but one idea crowded so fast upon another, that all was tumult and confusion, and it was some hours before she could obtain sufficient composure of mind to arrange her thoughts, and to reflect calmly on her situation. When she did, she saw herself on the brink of a precipice: she saw that she had unwarily engaged her heart without the sanction of those she was bound to obey; she saw that their aversion to love was as violent as ever—and prejudices of so long growth it seemed madness to expect to eradicate. Her father had said she should adopt that mode of life, which, on mature deliberation, she as well as they should judge most conducive to her happiness. The recollection of this assertion was her only comfort,

comfort, the only anchor on which she rested; and like the ship-wrecked mariner she clung to this one feeble prop, and blest the fate that gave a single refuge from despondency. That Lady Belmont sought to efface every remembrance of the friends she had left, was but too plain; that she feared to trust her out of her sight, or even to leave her in possession of her own thoughts, was equally certain—since the indisposition she had mentioned as a plea for putting her in her own apartment was palpably an excuse. That Hammond was not received as the brother of a friend was too, too evident: their distant manner, their averted looks, and silence since, with respect to him, were all so many fatal proofs of their prejudice against him. Yet wherefore this prejudice? It was unjust—it was cruel!—Hammond was every way amiable—deserving their highest esteem; others not blinded by partiality thought as she did. What should she do? Strive to forget him? Forget Hammond! impossible! His idea was interwoven with her very existence, and to forget him seemed a species of death. Till this separation

paration she knew not half how dear he was to her. Should she then love him still in opposition to the wishes of her parents? Heaven forbid! No—she would hope that they would indeed suffer her to adopt that mode of life which she as well as they thought necessary to her happiness: This promise, (for such it might be called) could not be retracted. In the mean time, she would study to oblige and please them, and by using every innocent art to interest them in behalf of Hammond, in time, perhaps at some future far-distant period, she might obtain their sanction of her love. If that were impossible, it *must* be conquered: if her heart refused to bend, it should break! But what would become of Hammond? She dared not think of this!—

The morning came, and saw her still in the same state of doubt and fear. Unable to sleep, she wished to rise:—but wherefore rise when every employment had lost its relish and was become insipid? If she played or sung, Hammond was not there to listen; if she drew, he was not there to look over and commend,—to give vigour to her genius and in-
spire

spire her pencil; if she walked, he would not be present to enliven every scene by his conversation—to point out the beauties of nature, and bid her remark graces before unheeded. If she went to her library, there his lamented sister was retraced to her imagination: with every page her idea was blended, while her persuasive eloquence, giving new force to truth and adding lustre even to the precepts of virtue, now for ever mute, every wound of her heart would bleed afresh, and she should remember with agony the friend whom she had now, more than ever, cause to lament, and of whose counsel she now more than ever stood in need.

Moving her curtain on one side, she was surprized to see Lady Belmont up and already dressed; since though Agatha had never once closed her eyes, Lady Belmont had arisen with so little noise, in the fear, as she now told her, of waking her, that she had not even heard her move. She enquired after Agatha's health with much tender solicitude, and was evidently shocked at observing the paleness of her countenance. Agatha now
rose,

rose, and Lady Belmont renewed her attempts to amuse her: She staid with her while she dressed, and attended her down stairs.

• They found Sir Charles with several prints before him on a table, and on another some new publications; all of which, he informed Agatha, he had purchased for her on his journey.—The examination of the prints passed an hour not unpleasantly; and when that was over, Lady Belmont taking up a work of humour which had recently appeared, desired Agatha to read it to her. She complied without hesitation, though her mind was little inclined for a performance of that kind.—A large collection of music was afterwards produced, and Agatha desired to play. Music she dreaded: she knew that in the moments of depression, however soothing it may be, it adds to that depression in the end; and by softening our hearts, encreases the sorrows it promises to mitigate. She rose, therefore, with a heavy heart, and walked slowly to the instrument.

“ You will be delighted with some of those
“ lessons,” said Lady Belmont; “ if you
“ knew

“knew how charming they were, you
“would be more impatient to play them
“Agatha;—But you have lost your ala-
“crite, my dear.”

“I have, indeed!” said Agatha, sighing.

“You must not give way to this, my love,”
said Lady Belmont. “Our spirits depend,
“in a great measure, on ourselves—if we
“fancy we are chearful, we actually become
“so: without that imagination the gayest
“scenes are lonesome, and with it the most
“perfect seclusion is lively. Besides, you
“know you assured me that you felt pleasure
“at my return—let me see it then.”

Agatha took the lessons and played one.
She then turned over a volume of songs; but
except some few which were entirely unmean-
ing, could find none but songs of humour
or drinking. At last, as she was putting it
down again, having seen no one likely to
please her, she accidentally opened to one,
the air and words of which, as she glanced
her eye over it, seemed to be superior to the
rest. She read the first verse, and pleased
with its simplicity and the appearance of
the

the air, and desirous to comply with her mother's wishes, she began to play and sing it. The following is a copy of the words.

THE CHILD OF PEACE.

Poor Laura was the happiest maid,
That danc'd beneath yon chesnut shade
Still sportive, chearful, and serene,
Her smiles enliven'd every scene—
Her very look bad sorrow cease,
For Laura was the Child of Peace!

Childhood forsook its darling play,
By Laura's side to pass the day
While tott'ring age its crutch threw by
To steal new life from Laura's eye—
Her smiles bad every joy encrease,
For Laura was the Child of Peace!

At length poor Laura's smiles are fled,
Pale languor takes their place instead.
No more her dance, no more her song,
Makes summer shine the winter long—
Her sighs still heave, her tears still flow,
And Laura is the Child of Woe!

Inhuman love has fill'd her breast,
 And robb'd her soul of peace and rest!
 A lover faithless—friends unkind—
 Who now shall heal her bleeding mind?
 Ah none! Those tears shall ever flow,
 For Laura is the Child of Woe!

No pitying bosom can remove
 The fest'ring wound of hopeless love.
 At last she sickens, droops, and dies,—
 In the cold grave poor Laura lies—
 And there once more her sorrows cease,
 And Laura is the Child of Peace!

The air which was sweetly simple, and which joined with a subject at that minute too near her heart, could not fail to affect her, was almost more than she could support: her voice faltered as she came to the last verse, and she could scarcely articulate the concluding words.

“The air of that is pretty,” said Lady Belmont, not appearing to remark her emotion, “but the words are silly enough. I wonder how it came among the collection.”
 “The end, indeed, expressive of the fatal
 “consequences

“ consequences of love is just; but then it
“ gives a power to the passion which it can
“ never have but over weak minds; for which
“ reason you will observe that it is much
“ more rarely a ruling passion in men than
“ in women—their minds are stronger and
“ their understandings more enlarged. It is
“ not without reason that love has been drawn
“ blind by poets and painters, and it is in-
“ tended to afford us an excellent lesson;
“ for who would commit themselves to a
“ blind guide? The mere girl, indeed, may
“ whimper and sigh, and dress up some ideal
“ object of adoration, and to this sacrifice
“ her time, her duty and her fame; but wo-
“ men of cultivated minds have nobler aims
“ in view! If, for a moment, imagination
“ has deluded their minds with the dreams of
“ love, they awake at once to sense and rea-
“ son, cast off the film from their mind’s eye,
“ and become again themselves. They look
“ beyond this world and its spiritless enjoy-
“ ments! Darting into futurity, they tear off
“ the veil which covers it from their view!
“ In Heaven only will they deign to place

“their Heaven, and thus, by anticipating
“its joys, they actually share them even on
“earth.”

Day after day passed in this manner; Lady Belmont constantly inculcating the same ideas, and Agatha, aware of the impracticability of the attempt, not daring to endeavour to change her sentiments.—Hammond's name she once mentioned, but it was heard with such marked aversion that she dared not repeat it. One minute she wondered he made no attempt to see her, the next recollected that he must be convinced of the fallacy of such an attempt from the cold and indignant reception he had met with from her parents at Milson Hall.—Her love thus hopeless, her mind sunk into a dejection which she wanted power to overcome; and which Lady Belmont's efforts to divert, by obliging her through gratitude to assume a serenity to which she was a stranger, served only to encrease.

She had continued in this situation some weeks; Lady Belmont never suffering her to quit her, never permitting her to pass a moment

ment unemployed, and not even allowing her time for thought, except what she stole at night by pretending to sleep. Yet the blessing she feigned to share, too often forsook her pillow; and when it did deign to visit her, it was

“ Still interrupted by distracting dreams,

“ That o’er the sick imagination rise,

“ And in black colours paint the mimic scene.”

Lady Belmont’s endeavours to amuse Agatha became in time evidently forced. She would suddenly forget the subject on which she was speaking, and change to another without being herself sensible of the transition. She became thoughtful, absent, and melancholy; and at the very moment in which she was assuming cheerfulness, and perhaps affecting to laugh, a tear would start in her eye,—she would gaze wistfully on Agatha for some minutes—then turn from her with a look of terror. Her sleep was interrupted by starts and sighs. When she believed Agatha asleep, she would frequently

rise in the night, and walk in disorder and agony across the room—her hands folded and raised to Heaven. Then she would fall on her knees, seem to say a short prayer, and return to bed, apparently more tranquil: and this she would repeat several times in a night.—Agatha terrified and shocked, feared a derangement of her faculties, and wished to have opened her mind to her father; but he shunned her presence. She seldom saw him—never but when her mother was present, and then his own mind appeared little more at ease than hers.—In this dreadful situation, she would have given worlds for some friendly bosom on which to have reposed, and confessed her misery and terror.—One of the servants, she had remarked, whenever she came into the room for any purpose, looked at her frequently, endeavoured to catch her eye, and seemed to make signs that she wished to speak to her. She endeavoured, but in vain, to seize an opportunity of meeting her; Lady Belmont never suffered her to be out of her sight.—She would often take her hastily by the hand and desire her to walk
with

with her into the garden, would say that she had something there to unfold—something to communicate to her dear child:—and on Agatha's attending her as desired, would sometimes change the subject—say that she had forget what she meant—sometimes that she would speak of it another time—in another place.

Agatha grew more and more alarmed. Some dreadful evil she believed she saw impending over her head; an evil which it seemed as impossible for her to foresee as to avert: whatever it were, she prayed to Heaven to give her strength to support the trial whenever it should arrive; and armed with the consciousness of internal innocence, and cheered by a firm reliance on the protection of Him, who never is implored in vain, her mind became calmer and better able to sustain its present dreadful state of doubt, anxiety, and terror.

She now, in her turn, strove by every effort in her power to amuse her mother's mind, and chase the gloom that hung upon her brow. When her own heart was almost

breaking, she would read, sing, converse, leave no attempt untried to divert her melancholy. But her endeavours, though received with kindness, were seldom successful; and Lady Belmont, from the latent grief which preyed on her mind, was seized with an illness which confined her to her bed. Agatha never quitted her night nor day; her attention was unwearied, and in her anxiety for her recovery, even Hammond was almost forgotten. Agatha's tenderness seemed to endear her more than ever to her mother; she appeared to have no peace except when looking at her—nor could sleep unless she held her hand the while.—After a fortnight of severe though not dangerous illness, she gradually recovered, and with her health, seemed, in some measure, to regain her spirits: she was less absent and less agitated than she had been before, though still melancholy and dejected at times.

When she was sufficiently recovered to walk in the garden, Agatha was pointing out to her notice several shrubs, and admiring their beauty.

“ You

"You love shrubs and flowers?" said Lady Belmont.

"Surely!" said Agatha; "It is one of the tastes you early taught me to cherish; and and it is a perpetual source of amusement."

"You shall always have some," said Lady Belmont; "and every variety of species my fortune can procure. They will flourish far better in that soil than in this."

"In what soil, my dear mother? What did you mean?"

"Nothing! but that you shall have a new and far more beautiful garden—I believe my thoughts were wandering I knew not whither—Do not ask me the meaning of any trifling incoherences in my manner—Agatha—a little time—to morrow—to day perhaps—But of this be assured, I love you more than my own life! and would lay down that life to make you happy."

Agatha, though somewhat relieved by the kind assurance which concluded the sentence, was, nevertheless, greatly alarmed. Some fatal secret was to be revealed she was now con-

vinced. But whatever its nature, she wished it told, since she could not conceive a horror beyond what she felt in this constant state of suspense and terror.

C H A P. XI.

AT night Lady Belmont complained of feeling fatigued, and retired with Agatha to her apartment an hour earlier than usual.

When they were up stairs, Lady Belmont shut the door, and taking two chairs, desired Agatha to sit on one of them; she herself sat down on the other, and taking her hand, "I think you love me Agatha?" she said.

"*Think* I love you!—and is not my mother assured of it?"

"I am—I am, Agatha—I am assured you love me with all the affection, and more perhaps than ever daughter felt for a parent."

She paused; and Agatha was too much alarmed by the solemnity of her manner to interrupt

interrupt the gloomy silence. After some minutes she continued.

“Agatha—*my* Agatha has a strong and noble mind—a mind superior to the feeble pleasures of this fleeting life—a mind capable of spurning every earthly bauble, to ensure her mother’s happiness in this world, and to preserve her from damnation in the next.

“Good God!” said Agatha, dropping on her knees, “What do you mean!—What would you say?—For God Almighty’s sake relieve me from the agony I feel—Do not—do not break my heart, but tell me all!—”

“Rise Agatha! ’Tis I that should kneel—’tis I that am the suppliant: a mother imploring at the hands of her child peace and salvation! O Agatha! Agatha! do you indeed love me? swear then to obey me.”

“This fatal mystery undisclosed, I dare not swear,” said Agatha; “yet all that I can do—all that my feeble nature can sustain—I will do to give peace to my mo-

“ ther. But if you would not break my
“ heart—if you do not wish to sink me to the
“ grave with terror and apprehension, hold
“ me not in this dreadful suspense.

“ Hear me then Agatha; and may the
“ blessed Virgin gave you strength and
“ courage to support the recital!—With
“ a guilt which years of contrition could
“ not expiate, I disobeyed my mother. I
“ was destined, for what reason I knew not,
“ as an offering to my God; and had only
“ quitted the convent where I had been edu-
“ cated, and to which I was destined to re-
“ turn for the remainder of my life, to spend
“ a few months at my mother’s habitation
“ previous to my leaving it for ever, when I
“ saw and loved your father. His affection
“ for me was equally strong; and I consent-
“ ed to fly with him from my mother, my
“ home, my country—and in the perishable
“ pleasures of worldly enjoyments, to abjure
“ the enthusiastic transports of a life of pure
“ devotion, and the Heavenly Spouse for
“ whom I had been destined. Believe me
“ Agatha when I say, that all the comforts
“ annexed

• annexed to wealth, society, and liberty, were
“ inadequate to atone for the remorse that
“ filled my guilty breast. I had disobeyed
“ my Heavenly and my earthly Parent ; and
“ Heaven by denying me offspring seemed
“ in vengeance to forbid any fruit of my,
“ guilty love.—Years had passed, and no for-
“ giveness from my mother could be obtain-
“ ed. I travelled to see her, time after time,
“ and was forbidden her presence. I wrote,
“ and my letters were returned.—At last, on
“ her death-bed she sent to me—I flew to
“ meet her—to confess my crime and obtain
“ pardon ere she expired. I travelled night
“ and day, and arrived while she was yet pos-
“ sessed of sense and speech. ‘ Agatha, she
‘ said, I yet live to forgive and bless you—
‘ yet live to tell my tale of horror. Born
‘ with dreadful and violent passions, which
‘ had been from my youth upwards suffered
‘ to assume the mastery of my reason, I lived
‘ a slave equally to love and hatred : ardent
‘ in my attachments, implacable in my re-
‘ sentments. Your father whom I adored,
‘ won by the beauty and artifices of a wi-
‘ dow

‘dow who sought to seduce him, treated me
‘with coldness, contempt, and aversion.
‘With a soul unable to brook the slightest
‘injury, one barbarous as this, stung me to
‘the quick. To revenge alone I looked for
‘retribution. I employed assassins to way-
‘lay and murder him. He was brought
‘home, bleeding, and almost lifeless. At
‘that moment all my love returned. My
‘crime appeared in its blackest dye—I wept
‘—I raved—and, in the bitterness of my
‘heart, vowed to God that the child I then
‘bore, should be devoted to him if his mercy
‘spared my husband. He was spared.
‘You was that child—and you fled from
‘me, and thus forbad the fulfilment of a
‘vow from which I hoped for an expiation
‘of my crime. O Agatha! she said, if your
‘heart feels any shadow of pity for the ago-
‘ny of mine, O! swear that if ever you are
‘a mother your child shall be destined to the
‘life from which you fled! Swear, swear
‘it Agatha, and I shall yet die content.
‘Years of contrition and remorse have in
‘some measure, I trust, atoned for my
‘crime;

‘ crime : but this single request—this dying
‘ adjuration can my child deny me ?’—I pau-
“ sed—I trembled—O ! forgive me, I said,
“ and think not that Heaven requires this at
“ our hands : the sacrifice of a penitent and
“ humble heart alone it seeks, and that you
“ have offered. ‘ Agatha !’ she cried in hor-
ror, ‘ you deny me then. You will see your
‘ mother expire in all the torments of re-
‘ morse and falsified vows—barbarous that
‘ thou art ! No—if thou canst not bear this,
‘ expect not my dying benediction : I cannot,
‘ will not bestow it.’ How could I act—
“ thus miserable—thus distracted ? I had no
“ child, was not pregnant, and Heaven seem-
“ ed to have ordained that none should call
“ me mother. By this vow I could obtain
“ her blessing and forgiveness, and after she
“ had passed a life of agony, remorse, and
“ horror, I could yet send her grey hairs
“ with peace to the grave. Her soul quiver-
“ ed on her lips. The cold damp of death
“ was spread over her frame. She looked at
“ me with ineffable tenderness ; with suppli-
“ cation, the supplication of a sinner at the
“ tribunal

“ tribunal of his Eternal Judge. She made
“ a feeble effort and seized my hand—
“ ‘Save me, my child ! swear to me !’ was all
“ she could utter—I do ! I do ! I exclaimed,
“ with the fervour of awakened devotion ;
“ and as I keep my vow may the Eternal
“ prosper me in this, and bless or curse me
“ in another world !—Bless you then ! she
“ said ; and casting a smile of death upon
“ me, sunk in my arms, and expired.”

Agatha trembled violently, raised her hands to Heaven in agony, but without speaking, and Lady Belmont proceeded.

“ Agatha, the want of offspring which had
“ before embittered every blessing, was then
“ no more : I trembled lest I should bring
“ into the world a child who wanted virtue,
“ courage, and heroism to forsake it for my
“ sake. But when the will of Heaven or-
“ dained your birth, I resolved to prepare
“ you, even in infancy, for the life to which
“ you was destined. I gave you every re-
“ source that solitude can desire :—you have
“ a little world within yourself. I painted
“ society to you, different, it is true, from the
“ colours

“colours in which I should have drawn it
“had you been designed to mingle with it ;
“since then, I would have softened evils you
“was necessitated to sustain, nor have torn the
“mask from vices with which you was con-
“demned to associate. But my colouring was
“just and true : such as the world is, such as
“I found it, and such as it will ever appear
“when the tinsel of novelty that decorates it
“is tarnished by the hand of time.—Say
“then, my Agatha ! my saviour ! my pre-
“server ! Speak ! shall thy mother glory in
“her child, and fame tell to after ages her
“duty and obedience ; or shall she have to
“weep over her weakness and ingratitude
“and blush to own herself a mother.”

Lady Belmont stopped, took both Agatha's hands, and looked at her with eager and trembling solicitude. Agatha was unable to speak—she was unable to weep—She gazed wildly at her mother, and for some minutes seemed lost to the recollection of every thing.

Lady Belmont, terrified at her appearance, screamed aloud ; then kneeling down to her,
“Agatha ! my child ! my love ! my dar-
“ling !”

“ling!” she exclaimed, “have you forgot
“me—forgot your mother? See, see I kneel
“to you—love you—O Agatha! beyond my
“life!”

Her recollection returned, and with it a
sense of misery beyond all she had before
known or imagined, “Rise, rise, I conjure
“you,” she said, folding her mother’s hands
between hers, “rise, nor break at once a
“heart that merits not the misery it endures.
“For you, for my mother, the best and dear-
“est of mothers, what dreadful sacrifice
“would I not make—yet this———”

“Bless! bless my child!” said Lady Bel-
mont, interrupting her hastily, “she consents,
“she consents——”

“Hear me—hear me speak,” said Aga-
tha, “hear a child to whom you have given
“life but to render it miserable, hear her
“plead the cause of virtue, of humanity, of
“religion even! Did God Almighty give
“me life—did he give me every tender af-
“fection of the human heart—pity for the
“afflicted, joy for the happy, and friendship
“for the good; did he plant in my bosom a
“delight

“delight mingled with veneration at the en-
“dearing names of wife —mother—friend
“—but to tear me from every sweet con-
“nection, but to snatch me from those wit-
“nessed blessings, and immure me in the
“cold cheerless cell of cloystered penance?
“Impossible! No, you yourself have said
“that Heaven seeks not this at our hands,
“that the sacrifice of a humble heart is all
“his mercy requires.”

“Agatha, do I live to hear this? It is
“enough. You deny me. Yes Agatha—
“I am satisfied, and the dreadful forfeiture
“of my vow I will pay for your sake: to
“make you happy here, your mother will
“endure an Eternity of misery! millions and
“millions of ages multiplied to infinity shall
“see her among the heirs of perdition, con-
“sumed by the worm that never dies.”

“Talk not thus, speak not so dreadfully,”
said Agatha, “if you would leave me sense
“and life to fulfil your dreadful mandate.
“Hear only what I would urge. You vow-
“ed—my mother vowed to devote me to
“Heaven—to Heaven cheerfully I devote
“myself,

“ myself, and have from my youth up-
“ wards.”

“ What is it I hear?” said Lady Belmont, in an extacy of joy, and folding her to her heart, “ my child! my Agatha!”

“ Yet hear me,” cried Agatha. “ To de-
“ vote myself to God is to do his will on
“ earth: he lives not in a temple built with
“ hands; it is the heart of innocence he de-
“ lights to inhabit: Him therefore will I
“ serve.”

“ Mistake not,” said Lady Belmont. “ You
“ would divide between the world you love,
“ and Him your duty compels you to serve,
“ that heart which should be wholly his. You
“ cannot serve God and mammon; and while
“ your lips were paying forced devotion, your
“ heart would wander to the vain allurements
“ of worldly and sensual delights. No! de-
“ ceive not yourself: this cannot be ef-
“ fected.”

“ Once more then hear me. That world
“ I will renounce, though with it I forsake
“ all hopes of happiness, and dreams of bliss
“ as pure as they were delightful: yet I will
“ forsake

“ forfake it for you ; will retire to some lone-
“ ly spot, where no society shall cheer or bless
“ me, where no human foot has left its traces,
“ and all is silent and solitary as the grave.
“ There buried in retirement, will I devote
“ my nights to prayer, my days to filial duty.
“ But force me not to leave you. How would
“ you endure to lose your Agatha? How, on
“ the bed of sickness would you call for your
“ lost child ! no friendly eye to watch you as
“ you slept, no one whose prayers and ten-
“ derness could sooth your pain, and call re-
“ turning health once more to bless you :

“ What pillow like the bosom of a child?”

“ O ! force me not to leave you ; nor by
“ commands I had rather die than disobey,
“ oblige me to take a vow at which my heart
“ recoils, and nature sinks within me !”

“ If you hesitate not to renounce the world,
“ my Agatha, why fear to take those vows
“ which, by rendering that renunciation a
“ duty, would, to a heart like yours, ren-
“ der it delightful? Come, my child ! a lit-
“ tle, little resolution, a small portion more
“ of that heroic spirit which already animates

“ your

“ your soul, will make your mother the hap-
“ piest of beings on earth, and ensure her an
“ eternity of bliss in Heaven. Think, O!
“ think you see her—imagine that in another
“ world you behold her a sharer of immortal
“ and exquisite felicity—think that to you
“ she owes it! Think that after you have en-
“ dured a life of privation here, whose short
“ period compared to eternity is less than the
“ thousandth part of a drop of water com-
“ pared with the ocean, think that then you
“ shall meet her in this pure and ever-during
“ state of felicity!—O Agatha! does not
“ your noble heart glow at the picture?”

“ I know not what I would say—what I
“ would think,” said Agatha: “ all within is
“ tumult and distraction. O! give me lei-
“ sure to reflect:—my mother is too gene-
“ rous—her soul would spurn the thought—
“ to owe to a moment of agitation, and sen-
“ sibility roused even to torture, a consent
“ which should be the consequence of cool
“ and determined reason. Thus far will I
“ promise; I will think, I will reflect, and
“ if convinced that what you ask me is my
“ duty,

"duty, my heart shall break if it refuses to
"fulfil it."

"Enough—enough—my Agatha! my
"child! my angel; for such you are."

"One thing beside I ask," said Agatha.
"Deny me not time nor opportunity for re-
"flection; allow me hours of retirement."

"Of retirement, Agatha?"

"Yes, nor fear them for me: they will
"enable me to conquer rather than to in-
"dulge every feeling my duty shall prompt
"me to surmount. I ask this for your sake
"as well as for my own; and without it,
"my mind, agitated by a thousand conflict-
"ing passions, must sink into hopeless me-
"lancholy, or lose in madness the remem-
"brance of its sufferings."

"My Agatha shall never ask in vain; she
"shall not have a wish ungranted which
"I have power to gratify. Would you like
"your own apartment, my love?"

"Take it not unkind, nor believe I wish
"to quit you—yet it would be an indul-
"gence."

"To morrow night then, to night, if you
"wish it, your bed shall be prepared."

" Tomorrow, if you please ; to night my
" spirits are not sufficiently collected to re-
" flect as I would wish."

" Would my sweet girl wish to go to bed
" now, or shall we sit up longer, and converse
" on ordinary subjects ?"

" I am unable to talk, and dare not think."

" Then you shall go to bed, my love.
" Shall I sit and watch you, or go to my
" own ?"

" Ten thousand thanks for your goodness !

" No, I will try to sleep."

" God send you that and every blessing,
" my Agatha ! and make me in future de-
" serving such a child, the only treasure her
" mother possesses ! Good night, my love !
" May Angels guard thy pillow, and give
" thee that peace this world cannot give !"

Then kissing her with the utmost tender-
ness, she assisted in undressing and putting
her to bed.

Dreadful is that situation where sleep is the
only refuge from calamity ; where the mind
shrinks from reflection ; where the future and
the past are alike the harbingers of sorrow ;
where

where to look back retraces to our view scenes of happiness never to be renewed, and to look forward presents a spectacle of misery we shudder to contemplate. Agatha in vain endeavoured to avoid reflection, and to lose in sleep the remembrance of her sorrows: her mind wandered in spite of her. Unable to sleep she attempted to collect her thoughts and to reflect with all the calmness possible on her situation and the dreaded prospect before her. Yet though it was impossible to banish thought, she found it equally so to force her thoughts into any regular channel; all was terror, misery, and despair.

C H A P. XII.

WHEN Lady Belmont rose in the morning she was terrified at the appearance of Agatha. She saw that her delicate frame had been unable to sustain the agitation of her mind; while the burning heat of her hand, her parched lips, and tremulous voice were but too plain indications of fever. “Merciful Heaven!” exclaimed Lady Belmont,

as she felt her pulse, "I have killed my
" child!"

"Why this alarm?" said Agatha faintly
"Why should my dear mother thus terrify
" herself? I am not quite well, it is true—"

"Not quite well! my love! my life! you
" are in a high fever! And 'tis I—barbarous
" that I am—O Agatha! Agatha! what will
" become of me!"

"I have not felt well for some days," said
Agatha, (wishing by this sweet deception to
ease her mother's mind, and to prevent her
imputing her illness to herself;) "this little
" complaint has hung upon me."

"And are you sure, quite sure you were
" ill before?" said Lady Belmont ea-
gerly.

"Indeed I was," said Agatha.

"And you never complained. Why did
" you not tell me? I would have died ere
" I would have distressed you when so little
" able to endure it."

"My illness was very trifling, and is still,"
said Agatha, "I will rise, and shall be
" better."

"No,

"No, I will send for Dr. Harley immediately."

"Pray do not. Wait but a few hours."

"I am sure I shall be better."

"Will you not take some saline mixture?"

"Surely I will; that or any thing you prescribe or wish me to take."

"But calm these apprehensions, my dear, my kind mother! Your terror magnifies an ailment which proceeds merely from a cold that I think I caught by the evening air a few days ago."

Agatha now attempted to rise, but her head turned round, and as she essayed to stand, she fell into her mother's arms. Lady Belmont then forced her to return to bed, and dispatched a servant for Dr. Harley. The servant had orders not to stop a minute, and he was to entreat the doctor to come without delay. The distance was short, and he arrived in less than an hour. When he had seen Agatha, he made Lady Belmont much easier by assuring her that he did not apprehend any danger from her daughter's illness; that her fever

was doubtless high, but not so much so as to be alarming ; and that, by keeping her perfectly quiet and her mind at ease, together with the necessary medicines, he had no doubt they should effect a cure.

“ Once, Madam,” he continued, “ on a melancholy occasion I was called to this sweet young lady when you was absent ; and found her nearly in the same state in which she is at present ; her disorder was then occasioned entirely by uneasiness of mind, and her frame is of so delicate a texture that it will not bear the slightest shock. When nature gives to the world a blessing like this, it delights to show us that it is mortal, that, by convincing us by how frail a tenure we possess it, we may learn, from the fear of losing it, to prize it the more dearly.”

Lady Belmont felt the force of this remark. O Agatha ! she thought, what a treasure have I condemned myself to lose ! How spotless a heart have I sworn to torture ! a heart how unequal to the conflict ! At the very moment in which I idolize my child, I plunge
a dagger

a dagger in her bosom!—And indeed severe as were Agatha's sufferings, those of Lady Belmont exceeded them. In a moment of anguish and horror, she had made a vow which she then believed she should never be called upon to fulfil, and which was extorted by the agonies of a dying parent. That vow, whether justly or not, she conceived herself bound to perform. She was far from believing the world such as she had represented it to Agatha; and though she had felt much repentance on account of her own deviation from duty, and a sincere and fervent desire of reconciliation, she had not felt *all* the remorse which, lest her daughter might be tempted to follow her example, she had thought it prudent to describe. The fatal secret of Agatha's destiny she had concealed from every one but Sir Charles, whose sentiments on the subject agreed with her own, and Miss Hammond, to whom it had been a source of perpetual though unavailing regret and sorrow. With a world such as she described she did not imagine that Agatha could be desirous to associate; and with unremitting

care she guarded her from every other impression. A pleasure neither known nor imagined cannot be regretted; and she conceived, therefore, that there would be a very small species of cruelty in depriving any one of pleasures they have never known nor believed to exist. A desire of going herself in search of a convent, the situation and regulations of which would be most conducive to Agatha's comfort, had induced her to go to France; not foreseeing that during her absence she should lose the only friend to whose protection she dared confide her child; that all the ideas she had laboured to instil should be destroyed in a day; that the veil should be withdrawn, and society in all its charms appear to her view. A single look of Hammond's was enough to reveal all; and in their disappointment at the frustration of their long-concerted plans, Sir Charles, and Lady Belmont, forgot for a time their affection for their child, and were only sensible of anger and vexation. From the hour in which they had been made acquainted with Agatha's change of abode, it had been determined, lest she

she might indulge in the remembrance of the scenes they wished her to forget as soon as left, that she should sleep in her mother's apartment, and never pass a moment but under her eye ; while it was agreed, that by unremitting assiduity they should endeavour to amuse her mind, and destroy every dangerous impression. Lady Belmont loved her daughter ; and when she saw the struggles of her soul on the disclosure of the fatal secret, would have died to shield her from the impending evil ; would have endured any thing except the breach of that vow which she had always believed she ought rather to perish, nay, to behold her child expire, than violate.

Agatha's illness soon gave way to medicine ; and in less than a week she had lost all remains of fever, though she still continued weak and languid.—Being now, however, well enough to require no farther attendance, she slept in her own room, and there

“ Had room for meditation e'en to madness !”

She saw that she must either render her mother guilty of a crime which threatened

her with the eternal vengeance of Heaven, or be herself a victim immolated at the shrine of superstition, and renounce friends—lover—every thing!—Yet could her mother suffer for a crime which she caused her to commit? No, that were impossible. On whom then would the guilt fall? On herself: on her, who, spurning a mother's tears, anguish, and entreaties, had dared to prefer her wishes to her duty. Dreadful—dreadful alternative!—Whichever way she turned misery seemed to await her, and, like her shadow, pursued her whithersoever she fled. Her mother had said, that no pleasures the world had bestowed could compensate for the contrition she had felt since her own deviation from duty: If such had been her mother's remorse then, who knew not that a vow would be broken by her disobedience, how much greater and more bitter would be her own! Hammond's esteem she prized beyond even his love; and would not that be lessened by the knowledge of her disobedience? How should she say to her children; Be it your study on all occasions to perform your duty, nor let pleasure
or

or any views of self-gratification tempt you to swerve from it, if her own conduct had been in opposition to her precepts? How too could she bestow on Hammond a heart divided betwixt love and duty—sinking with sorrow, and bleeding with remorse?—And could she endure to make wretched a parent whom nothing but an irrevocable vow would have forced to contradict a single wish of her heart; and who, in preparing her for the life to which it destined her, had devoted her whole time to the cultivation of those talents from which alone she could derive comfort in retirement? Had she loved her less, she would have been regardless of her peace, would have neglected her education, would have suffered her to mix with the world till a fondness for it had become habitual, and then have dragged her from it to misery and seclusion. But no! it had been her whole study to fit her daughter for her allotted station. She had therefore the strongest claim to her gratitude, and she could not oppose her will without remorse. And how far sweeter would be a life of sorrow with the consciousness of internal rectitude,

than one possessed of every pleasure but that which alone can constitute actual happiness—a self-approving heart ! and whose every joy was sullied by repentance !——Her mind ceased to waver, and she determined to devote herself a willing though heart-broken sacrifice to duty and obedience. Yet lest time and further reflection should change a resolution which she was determined nothing less than a contrary conviction of its injustice should effect, she resolved not to make known to her mother for some days the result of her melancholy deliberation.

The morning after these reflections, as she was dressing, some one knocked gently at the door, and the maid servant, whose signs she had remarked so long before, but, with whom she could never seize an opportunity of speaking, entered softly, shut the door after her with an appearance of much secrecy and caution, and then coming near to Agatha and speaking low, and curtsying at the same time —“ If you be pleased Miss to hear me,” she said, “ I can mayhap be of more sarvice to you than you think for. I have tried and
“ tried,

“ tried, and fretted and fretted, and contriv-
“ ed and contrived, and all to no end, till
“ now that my Lady lets you have a little
“ bit of time to yourself.”

“ I am much obliged to you, Hannah ;
“ but what is it you want with me ?”

“ O Miss ! you shall hear it all, if so be
“ you’ll have patience. Excuse my freedom,
“ Miss, but a prettier faced gentleman I ne-
“ ver feed in my life—But you shall hear it
“ all. As I was passing by the back door
“ that goes to the harb garden one day with a
“ pail of water in my hand, who should I see but
“ the nicest young gentleman I ever set eyes
“ on, but he looked sad and sorrowful and
“ moped most dismally ; and so he put his hand
“ into his pocket, and told me if I would con-
“ trive to give that letter to Miss Belmont,
“ he should be internally obliged to me. And
“ so, Miss, as I could not go to refuse a fel-
“ low creature in distress, and moreover one
“ that was so pretty spoken and goodly-look-
“ ing into the bargain, I took it, and till this
“ blessed minute have never had any likeli-
“ hoods of giving it to you. Then putting

“ her hand into her pocket, she recollected
“ that she had forgot to bring the letter with
“ her, and had left it locked up in her box of
“ cloaths, but promised to fetch it imme-
“ diately.”

“ You surprize me greatly,” said Agatha,
who had no doubt that the letter was from
Hammond. “ What was the appearance of
“ the gentleman ?”

“ Tall, Miss, and as I said, very pretty
“ faced.”

“ Of a complexion rather dark ?”

“ No, Miss, rather fair, as one may say ;
“ with the whitest hand I ever saw besides
“ your’n and my Lady’s. There is to be
“ sure a gentleman that’s neither so fair nor
“ good looking, and yet not brown as one
“ may say neither, that often walks about the
“ park and grounds, and Robert Mathers
“ was a little afraid he might be a poacher,
“ as they sayn he ofteneft comes towards
“ night ; but he was telling us other servants
“ about him, and John said my master seed
“ and spoke to him and seemed as if he
“ knowed him one day, and so Robert said
“ no

“no more about him. Nay for that matter,” continued Hannah, who plainly perceived from Agatha’s countenance that the dark gentleman was the favourite, “I don’t go for to say that one mayn’t be as handsome as t’other, beauty’s all fancy, you know Miss; you may happen like rough faces, now a pretty, snug, neatly looking face was always the face for my money—Howsoever, be it which it will, any service I can do you I’ll do it as freely as if it was to serve myself.” So saying, she went out of the room as cautiously as she had entered it, leaving Agatha in equal astonishment and agitation. That the person last described was Hammond she had no doubt; that he had seen her father, though she had not been suffered to see him, was now certain; and from his never repeating his visit the answer given him was too plain: how indeed could it be otherwise, destined as she was to abjure him and all the world?—Who the other person could be did not strike her; but certain that it was not Hammond, she waited though with curiosity yet without impatience the return of Hannah.

Hannah was some time before she returned ; when at last she came in, " O Miss ! " she whispered, " We had like to have been all " blown. I met my Lady upon the stairs when " I went from you, and so she said, ' Pray " where have you been Hannah ! ' Been ! your " Ladyship, says I. ' Yes, says she, you came " out of my daughter's room.' O my Lady, " says I, I only went to fill Miss's water-bottle, " because Jenny had forgot to fill it over " night. And so, Miss, if she should axe " you any thing about it, you know your " cue—that's all." She then gave Agatha the letter, and not daring to stay for fear of Lady Belmont's coming, went out of the room immediately.—With equal surprize and pity Agatha read the following melancholy letter :

" I have known love, and I have known sorrow in consequence, yet never, adored Miss Belmont ! equal to what I have felt since I saw and have been divided from you. This heart imagined it loved another till your angelic form and mind chased the illusion, and

and convinced me I but dreamed of love before. Your parents deny themselves to every one ; and for what barbarous motive I know not, baffle every attempt to see you—formed as you are to make a Paradise on earth wherever you appear.—With not a ray of hope to cheer me, I yet dare to address you—despair gives me courage. Fortune is nothing to those who love ! I have enough for both—enough to make my home a Heaven would you but consent to share it. O ! then imagine what I dare not express !—Yet you cannot—will not—hope I have none. Pray then for me. Pray that *that* Heaven which sees my sufferings may end at once or mitigate them.—Dare I write the name of

WILLIAM MILSON.”

Agatha had just time to put the letter into her pocket before Lady Belmont entered. She examined Agatha's countenance with an anxious and scrutinizing eye, but forbore to ask any questions.—After breakfast Agatha proposed walking and asking Lady Belmont to accompany her. When the mind is ill at
ease

ease it seems to find relief from exercise : perhaps the change of posture and of place with the variety of objects may promise a suspension of suffering ;—from whatever cause the relief proceeds the wretched have always had recourse to it.—They walked for more than an hour ; each sedulously avoiding the subject which occupied their minds.

C H A P. XIII.

IN the afternoon, Agatha went to her room to read again Mr. Milson's letter, and to write the answer to which she thought it entitled. Lady Belmont, remembering Agatha's request, made no attempt to follow her. She wrote the following reply :

“ Gratitude for the many instances of hospitality and friendship which I have received from every part of your family, together with that I feel for the generous sentiments expressed in the letter I but this morning received, induces me to do, what in other circum-

stances I should condemn—to make a reply to a letter clandestinely sent.—Much as a regard so disinterested as yours deserves, were I even permitted to dispose of my own heart (which I am not) gratitude and esteem would be the only returns in my power to make.—Be assured that the peace and welfare of yourself, and every individual of your family, will ever be dear to me; and that I will not forget to number in my prayers friends so deservedly entitled to every mark of gratitude and regard from

AGATHA BELMONT.”

When she had folded up and sealed this letter, she put it in her pocket, designing to give it to Hannah the first opportunity she had of speaking to her; and not wishing to be absent longer than was necessary, she went down stairs immediately afterwards.—Not finding Lady Belmont in the drawing room, and imagining she might be walking, she went into the garden. She did not find her there, and her mind, intent on the melancholy prospect which for ever occupied it, enduring a
state

state of misery little short of distraction, though firm in her resolves to perform what she believed her duty, she strayed to the gate which opened from the garden into the park, and from thence into the road adjoining. She had not gone far when she was awakened from her melancholy reverie by observing a gentleman on horseback galloping towards her. He jumped from his horse when he came up to her, and with equal surprize and pleasure she was addressed by Mr. Ormistace. "Miss Belmont!" he exclaimed in transport, "how shall I express my delight at
" meeting you! Scarcely a day has passed in
" which I have not taken this road in hopes
" of seeing you; since a private meeting was
" all even I could expect, denied as you have
" been by your parents to every one: and
" though my age and appearance precluded
" every idea that I came on any other footing than that of a friend, I have been denied like the rest. What are their intentions towards you God only knows; but of
" this I am certain, nothing can justify their
" locking up such a jewel, and that if they
fail

" fail in their duty towards you, yours as a
" child it cancelled towards them."

Agatha burst into tears. " O! Mr. Or-
" mistace," she said, " the kind the generous
" concern you take in my fate I never can
" repay. But accuse not my parents ; indeed
" they deserve it not. If an inviolable necessity
" forces them to relinquish for themselves
" and me the friends they would otherwise
" embrace with transport, their situation
" merits pity rather than blame. Of this be
" assured from me: They have made my
" happiness their study ; to me have devoted
" all their hours, and are entitled to every
" act of gratitude and obedience in my power
" to pay."

" Good God! Is it to study your happi-
" ness to seclude you from the world? At an
" age when the soul is tuned to pleasure,
" when the heart beats high with hopes of
" social delight, when every eye adores you
" and every tongue is loud in your praises?
" O Miss Belmont! is this to study your
" happiness? Good God! You might as well
" be a nun at once."

This

This dreadful word struck like death to the heart of Agatha. The blood forsook her cheeks; and all but fainting, she turned away her head to conceal her emotions. When a moment's reflection had somewhat recovered her, "Mr. Ormistace," she said, "Business of necessity will shortly call my parents to France. If we should continue to reside there, shall I trouble you with remembrances to those dear friends, whom, as it is possible we may be obliged to leave England suddenly, I may be unable to see before I quit them, perhaps for ever.—To Mrs. Herbert give every assurance of a friendship that shall end but with my life. Tell her I will write to her—will love her—will pray for her happiness; that I will never lose nor part with her little smelling bottle; and ask her to accept this in exchange—and when she looks at it to think of me, and repeat my name.—Assure Miss Milson of my gratitude for all the hours of pleasure I passed under that hospitable roof. Tell her I will never forget her; that I shall think of her often, and
" always

“ always with affection.—Assure the good
“ Mr. Crawford of my regard and veneration;
“ and ask him to remember me in his prayers:
“ the prayers of a good man are always
“ heard.—There is one other,” continued she
hesitating,—“ yet why should I fear to name
“ him?—Mr. Hammond!—Tell him I re-
“ gard, esteem, value him beyond every
“ other friend; and that

“ ———without a prayer for him

“ My orisons shall never close.”

“ Tell him that if he prizes my happiness
“ he will himself be happy—that nothing
“ on earth can give me such comfort as to
“ know that he is so. But perhaps you need
“ not—perhaps I may—Yet it may be im-
“ possible—say then this for me—”

“ But Miss Belmont! sweetest dearest
“ young woman! why must all this be? My
“ heart is almost too full to reason with you;
“ yet another opportunity may never be ob-
“ tained. Hear me speak then. You love
“ these friends; it is misery to that charming
heart

“ heart to part from any one of them : and
“ Hammond you love with a tendernefs that
“ would make him and yourfelf the happieft
“ beings on earth. Why ? For what cruel
“ purpofe are you to be divided ? No duty
“ exafts fuch a facrifice. Your parents you
“ fay love you—curfe on their love if it is to
“ make you wretched ! We have no right to
“ give life to thofe to whom we purpofe to
“ deny happinefs. Life of itfelf is no blefs-
“ ing : no ! when debarred the comforts it
“ requires it is the heavieft curfe. But the
“ moments are precious,—I dare not wafte
“ them. Truft to me that no duty binds you
“ to forfake Hammond ; a man that loves you
“ as his own foul ! Conſent to fly with me.—
“ Emma is at home, and will receive you
“ with tranſport. I will procure chaiſes in-
“ ſtantly, and ſhe ſhall accompany you with
“ Hammond to Scotland. If they refuſe to
“ forgive you (which is not likely) half of
“ my fortune ſhall be yours. Hammond as
“ well as William Milſon offered to your fa-
“ ther to settle the whole of your fortune
“ upon you—mine therefore ſhall be yours
“ inſtead :

“ instead: it shall be divided between you and
“ Emma. She has a soul that will glory in
“ the division—if she had not, it should all
“ be yours. Come! not a moment is to be
“ lost. Suffer me to conduct you at once
“ from tyranny and injustice, to freedom,
“ love, happiness, and Hammond.”

“ No, Mr. Ormistace; it is, it is indeed
“ impossible. Beyond my life, and every
“ comfort of my life, I prize what I believe
“ my duty.”

“ And does no duty bind you to Ham-
“ mond? a man that adores you! whose
“ whole happiness is wrapt up in you! Can
“ you delight to make him miserable?”

“ Delight in it? No! Heaven forbid!—
“ No, Mr. Ormistace, I would die to make
“ him happy—do any thing but renounce my
“ duty; and to that an immoveable resolu-
“ tion has determined me to adhere. I dare
“ not stay longer. God bless you, and re-
“ ward you for this goodness!”—Then tak-
ing one of his hands, and folding it be-
tween both of hers, fare——farewell! she said;
and not daring to trust herself with him a
moment

moment longer, darted from him with a strength and swiftness almost supernatural; and ran through the park into the garden. When she had reached a seat she threw herself into it and burst into an agony of tears.

"Where has my sweet girl been?" said Lady Belmont, who came up to her at this moment; "I have been looking for you every where."

Agatha trembled violently, and was unable to speak.

"Surely something has terrified you, my love?" said Lady Belmont. "Tell me—speak to me—What—whom have you seen?"

Agatha, who scorned deceit, and dared not confess the truth, was still silent; and Lady Belmont, perceiving her unwillingness to reply, urged her no farther, but made at the same time a secret determination not to trust her so long out of her sight again.

In the evening Agatha attempted to read and work, but her spirits were too much agitated to suffer her to pay attention to either.

She

She then endeavoured to paint, but her hand shook so violently she could not guide her pencil. Still, however, her resolution continued firm. Though more than ever sensible of the misery of her lot, though more than ever regretting Hammond, and for his sake, the world, she yet determined to pursue her dreadful purpose; assured that the sweet consciousness of performing our duty, repays us in the end for every sacrifice it enjoins; or at least if it does not repay us, so mitigates every sorrow that it enables us to endure it with resignation.

After a night of anguish, though of unshaken fortitude, she was awaked from a short sleep by Hannah, who with great precaution entered on tiptoe, and opened her curtain. "Well, Miss," she said, "have you got a letter wrote?"

"I have," replied Agatha; "and if you can find any means of sending it to the gentleman from whom the other came I shall be obliged to you."

"To be sure I can," said Hannah; "match me who can at contrivances. Though my

“ Lady to be sure keeps a pretty sharp look
“ out.—But what of that, when a body has
“ a mind of a thing ! I defies any body to
“ stop a young lady or her servant either, in
“ the persecution of a scheme. But what I
“ wanted mostly for to say to you, Miss, was
“ this: that I hopes you have given a pretty
“ kindly answer to the gentleman; and if so
“ be, he should not be the very man you had
“ a mind of, why what of that ? This world,
“ as the parsons tell us, is a state of purga-
“ tion and trial, and a body can’t have every
“ thing they want; and so, if belike you
“ can’t get the very indiavittle husband you
“ may be chanced to chuse, why you should
“ take up with another, and be thankful you
“ can get any. Nay, for the matter of that,
“ a man’s a man, and I don’t see no great
“ difference among ’em for my part.”

“ I am obliged to you for your advice,
“ Hannah,” said Agatha; “ but the letter I
“ have written is such as on consideration I
“ judged most proper.”

“ Nay, to be sure you ought to know your
“ own business best, Miss,” returned Han-
nah;

nah; " but mayhappen I could tell you
" something you little dream of, and that's
" what makes me so agog to get you marri-
" ed. You must know, Miss —— but it's
" a shocking thing to say to you—but as sure
" as you're alive and now sit up in that bed,
" your Mamma means to make a nun of
" you."

" What reason have you to think so,
" Hannah?"

" Reason enough, and too much o' con-
" science. But I'll tell you all, Miss. You
" must know that Mrs. Wildys, my Lady's
" woman, happened to be in my Lady's
" closet laying up her muslins out of the wash,
" and my Lady had no more suspicions of
" her being there, than she has of my being
" talking to you now. Well now, though
" to be sure Mrs. Wildys would not go for
" to listen upon no account, yet ears are ears,
" and a body can't help knowing what's said
" in one's hearing. So she heard my Lady
" and Sir Charles both come in and talk of a
" sakerfice: and then they talked about
" nuns and abbeyes and things I knows no

“ more about than the Pope at Rome. How-
“ somever, the long and the short of the
“ matter is this: she made out that all their
“ notion was to make you a nun.”

“ I am much indebted to you for your con-
“ cern on my account, Hannah,” said Aga-
tha; “ but I am very certain my father and
“ mother will neither make me that nor any
“ thing else without my consent.”

“ Why, Miss, I think it is fartin sure you
“ would never be rash enough to consent to
“ that. Why, Lord blefs you, your nuns
“ what do you think they do? Why they live
“ in a monstrous grate, and there they’re all
“ shut up together, and ben’t allowed to speak
“ to their own fathers but thorough the bars.
“ O! I’d rather be an old maid fifty, nay a
“ hundred times over; and that’s bad enough,
“ seeing they’re the laughing stock of every
“ one. But matrimony is a holy constitu-
“ tion, and quite another matter. And so,
“ Miss, if you’ll be ruled by me, let ne’er an
“ old crab of ’em all govern you, but make
“ off with this young gentlemen sharply, and
“ my life for it you never repent it.”

“ I shall

“ I shall never repent doing my duty,” said Agatha; “ and no persuasions shall induce me to disobey my parents.”

“ Nay, Miss, if you come to that,” said Hannah, “ I don’t know that you could do any manner of thing more inducive to your Mamma’s anger, than having letters and writing answers to ’em unbeknown to her. When you have gone so far as that, I don’t think you need make much bones of marrying the gentleman.”

Agatha, who now felt that she had acted imprudently in receiving the letter and afterwards in answering it unknown to her mother, was shocked at the last insinuation, but recollecting herself, she said, “ The letter you gave me, and which I have answered, is of a peculiar kind, and one which I could not without ingratitude refuse to reply to. My answer to it is such, that if my mother herself saw it she would approve it; and I shall neither receive nor write any more of the kind.”

Hannah somewhat displeased that her advice was not taken, or, at least, received with

the gratitude she expected, muttered two or three "Very well Misses," and putting the letter into her pocket went out of the room.

About noon, Agatha having retired to her library to indulge in a few moments of melancholy reflection, Hannah came and informed her that a young woman was then at the door who asked to speak with her. "With me?" said Agatha.

"Yes, Miss, with you; and a very goodly looking young woman she is too; and this is a matter of the fourth time she has come to axe for you, but my Lady's so plaguy cunning that she always contrives to pack her off again. Howsomever this time I was resolved for to let you know it, come what would."

"I will go down to her immediately," said Agatha; "but I have no idea who it can be." She then ran down stairs, but before she had reached the hall the person was gone. "May happen she's not out of sight," said Hannah. Agatha then went to the door, and looking along the avenue saw a young woman whose figure she thought she recollected,
walk-

walking slowly from the house. Agatha pursued, and overtook her with little difficulty.

“ Ah Madam !” said the person, whom she immediately recognized as Jemima Simmonds, now Mrs. Arnold, “ How, how happy am I at last to meet you ! Time after time I have come here to see you, for never have I forgot, and I pray to Heaven I never may forget all your goodness to me ; and how you pitied all my sorrows ; and now that I am as happy as the day is long, I could not bear but to come and tell you so, for I knew your kindness would take a part in all my happiness as if it was your own.”

“ Happy indeed am I, my dear Jemima, to see you so,” said Agatha ; “ and Heaven preserve to you that peace you so richly deserve ! And how does Mr. Arnold ?”

“ O Madam ! My dear Harry is well and happy as his Jemima : and not a day goes over our heads that we do not bless Mr. Ormistace, and you, and Mrs. Herbert.”

Lady Belmont observing from the window some one in conversation with Agatha, joined her

her immediately; and Agatha presented Jemima to her, saying at the same time, "This, my dear Madam, is the sweet girl whose kindness to her aged parent I have so often described to you, and who comes now to give me the welcome assurance that she is rewarded as she deserves."

"Far, far indeed beyond my deserts," said Jemima, "almost beyond my desires; for never could I think of such a happy life as I lead. O Madam! surely there is no happiness on earth like that of true lovers. I often think that if it was not for knowing that this life cannot last for ever, we should seem to be in Heaven already."

"The first months of a married life are the happiest in it," said Lady Belmont, who by no means approved of this picture for her daughter. "Love owes its best charms to novelty; and when time has familiarized a married pair to each other, the affection they at first felt is remembered as a dream."

"O Madam! forgive my boldness," said Jemima, "but this can never happen in true—real true lovers. The more they see
and

“ and know one another, the more they love;
“ for every day, Madam, gives them some
“ new mark of kindness to remember; and
“ by degrees, as the very great warmth of
“ love, as I may say, wears off, it leaves be-
“ hind it something more happy yet! If I
“ had but had education, I think I could de-
“ scribe what I mean—a kind of softly—
“ gentle goodwill towards each other, as I
“ may say.”

“ I am glad to see you so happy, young
“ woman,” said Lady Belmont, “ and I hope
“ you will continue as much so as it is *possible*
“ to be: but unless you can walk in, I will
“ not detain you.”

Jemima curtsied modestly, and was prepar-
ing on this hint to take her leave, but Aga-
tha, taking her hand said in a tone of the
tendereft affection, “ Nay, my dear Jemima,
“ I cannot part with you yet; I shall insist
“ upon your coming in with us and taking
“ some refreshment after your long walk.”
She then led her into the library, and Lady
Belmont, followed, evidently little pleased
with her guest, and trembling at the impres-
sion

fion her artless descriptions might make on Agatha's mind.

"And is your grandmother as well as usual," said Agatha, as they entered the library.

"Better, Madam," said Jemima. "Our happiness seems to have made her young again: and Harry tries to prove his love for me by watching and attending her. He was always a scholar, and when his work is done, will read to her by the hour together. O Madam! I can hardly ask such a favour, yet if you would but come and look in upon us and see how our little cottage is trimmed and adorned it would make us so proud. We have every thing about us that the heart can wish. In an evening against Harry returns from work, I trim up the little parlour, put every thing in order, and spread a cloth upon the table; and our brown loaf and home-made cheese eats so sweet a lord might envy us. Then too I take delight in decking out the chimney with flowers, and when he praises my bow-pot I feel as proud and as happy!

"—O

“ —O Madam ! them only that love and
“ are married know what it is to be happy :
“ God send that one day you may be so too !
“ that wedded to some great gentleman that
“ loves you and that you love, every day may
“ be like mine happier and dearer than the
“ last ; till full of years and honoured and
“ loved by every body, you shall, as the holy
“ David has it, see your children’s chil-
“ dren !”

Agatha burst into tears : and Lady Belmont, unable to suppress the agony she felt, put her hand to her head and walked hastily out of the room. Jemima had touched every string of their hearts ; Lady Belmont’s vibrated at once with pity, maternal tenderness, and remorse. She saw—she felt the force of Jemima’s artless delineations. She knew that a heart like Agatha’s was framed for the blessings of the tenderest attachment, which though differing in minute circumstances from Jemima’s description, owing merely to the difference of station, would not be less sweet, less pure, nor simple ; and she never felt before the full value of the sacrifice

fice she required.—Agatha, who saw herself deprived for ever of a life of exquisite felicity, and condemned to one at which her heart recoiled, felt at the same moment the greatness of the sacrifice ; yet firm and decided in whatever she believed her duty, her purpose remained unchanged : no temptations could allure, no fears deter her from it ; and the greater the sacrifice the greater she was sensible would be the merit of enduring it in the cause of virtue.

After a minute's silence, “ My dear Jemima,” said Agatha, “ will want no remembrance to remind her of her friend, yet if she will accept of this little locket—I am going far away ; it is possible may never return to England.”

“ God forbid that you should not, Madam !” said Jemima : “ many will be the poor that will suffer if you leave them.”

“ We know not what may happen,” replied Agatha ; “ but of this be assured, I will never forget you, and every comfort you enjoy I shall think adds to my happiness. O Jemima ! that I had been born in a station

“ tion like yours ! that that brown loaf and
“ home-made cheese had been my lot ! with
“ such—just such a faithful, generous heart
“ to share them with me ! O Jemima ! you
“ are happier than a Queen. May Heaven
“ preserve to you, long, long preserve to you
“ the blessings you possess ! I cannot be
“ quite wretched while those I love are hap-
“ py.”

Lady Belmont now returned, followed by a servant with refreshments, whom she ordered to wait. This prevented any farther conversation as she had designed ; and Jemima soon after took her leave.—Agatha attended her to the door. “ God bless you, my sweet
“ Jemima,” she said ; “ do not forget me !
“ and pray that if I am condemned to sorrow
“ in this life, I may bear it with the constancy and resignation you did.”

“ O ! I will pray that you may never have
“ any to bear,” said Jemima ; then taking Agatha’s hand, she kissed it, and wept over it.—Agatha pressed her to her heart, and after looking at her in speechless anguish, not

daring to trust herself longer with her, she ran up stairs.

“ When our spirits are inclined to be depressed,” said Lady Belmont, as she entered the room, “ how mere a trifle is too much for them ! The description of cottage happiness has, indeed, something in it peculiarly affecting : a white loaf and Parmesan cheese would not have excited a tear in either of us. But indeed Jemima’s happiness is superior to all I ever knew ; for it is the reward of filial piety : and with that consciousness of virtue which possesses her mind, and which, though she does not know it, is the sole source of all her blessings, she would have been equally happy in every other situation ; separated from the man she loves as well as united to him. To believe ourselves blest is eventually to be so ; and who can believe themselves otherwise when they enjoy the approbation of Heaven and of their own conscience ? ”

Agatha, whose spirits were too much depressed to converse on any subject, but especially on one which had so recently affected her,

her, made no attempt to reply to assertions, which if just were at that peculiar moment unfeeling at least. The contrast between the misery of her own and the blessings of Jemima's situation was too strong to be lessened by reasonings much more convincing than those Lady Belmont used. Yet while she was rendered more than ever sensible of her own distresses, her generous heart exulted in Jemima's happiness; and shrinking with horror from the darkness in which her own fate was involved, she turned to contemplate the cloudless sunshine of Jemima's future days; and blessed Heaven for that felicity which could never be her own.

END OF VOL. I.